

OH WOW IT'S THE OFFICIAL ZINEPAPER OF CAMP SATANIC DRUG THING HERE AT YOUTOPIA 2024

STAY SALTY

MADE WITHOUT ANY AI AND IT'S KINDA FUCKED UP THAT THIS IS A THING THAT NEEDS TO BE SAID

LETTER FROM
THE EDITOR

Hello reader, how are you? I am fine.

Let's address some elephants in the room, hello elephants. This exists in the shadow of *Piss Clear*, the legendary printed-at-Burning-Man newspaper. We're aware of it, and while not modeling ourselves after it, we're also totally fine with someone going, "Oh hey, this is kind of like *Piss Clear* kinda?". Like in a both of these are fun to read and you're reading it at a burner subculture event.

We're, I think, more modeling ourselves on that old zine culture. Remember those? Back when the internet was Geocities but you still had to get news on bands somehow? Seeing as the average age here is starting to creep closer and closer to the "discount on your breakfast" zone, you probably do. If not, they were these DIY printed small magazines (get it? 'zines?') which ran as an alternate way to communicate to people and synchronize subcultures in the days where (1) the internet didn't do that at the speed of thought, and (2) when subcultures existed. This is kinda that except centered around giving you something to kill time with during the slower parts of your day here.

So reader, again, biases in front, our hope here is really three fold: first, that you enjoy this at face value for the writing and little time wastng; second, that it creates a more cohesive sense of community by sharing common understanding and knowledge; and three, that you don't fucking moop these. Seriously, please don't fucking litter these I swear to fucking god if I see these just fluttering about in the wind 'cause people are making a mess of them I will fucking lose it do you know how much I swore I would do what I can to keep that from happening in the art placement form?

Ok, gotta go, write back and if it's cool we'll publish it in (checking my watch here) a year,

Cheers,
staysaltyzine@gmail.com



Drug Testing, Artist's Impression

YOUR ASS SHOULD
BE TESTING DRUGS
(NOT LITERALLY YOUR ASS)

Ok, yes, we know, your dealer is cool and a real stand up sort of person. Doesn't even deal with fent. Great. Now, can you be sure that every single person on the chain leading back from your dealer did a perfect job of sanitizing that scale after weighing the previous whatever before they put your drugs on it? No? Because that's how that shit happens. No one is creating deathtrap bags or anything on purpose. People are just rushing, swipe the stuff into a bag, then measure the next thing, and guess what is lethal at really small doses. Right. That thing that they just weighed out and hurriedly pushed into a bag and didn't quite get every last bit of.

Cause yes, that shit happens and is happening all the time. That's the most common story of all these accidental ODs in a nutshell.

And it's not complicated to test. If you've done a COVID test, a fentanyl test is even easier. Follow the instructions on whichever one you happen to get (they'll run like \$1.50 each, give or take), but generally speaking, you take a small amount of the drug either from the baggy or from middle of a pill, add the correct bit of water, stir, put test strip in, wait 60 seconds, count the lines.

That's it. No swirling a stick in your nose or whatever unless you really want to. And water is basically the easiest shit in the world to get. And you, of all people, have a small baggy available. Hell, you can re-use the one the drugs came in after you pour the drugs out. The leftover powder will be enough.

We have some strips. Come ask us, we're on the outer part of the southwest loop.

Yeah, people always said you should test drugs, and it wasn't as big a deal, but the difference now is that the amount of fuck up necessary to kill you went from "you really fucked up by a lot" to "you didn't get the scale perfectly clean just one time", and that's not just way more likely, that's happening irl.

SDT SCHEDULE

We are on the southern path west of 3l3mental, in the area lovingly referred to as The Devil's Armpit. Come by and say "Hello".

24/7 Art
The Little Free Satanic Drug Thing Library
The Crowfessional Confessional
The Oddish Aviary
Shelvis
Cuddlepool

Wednesday DJ Sets
8am - Metal Mornings
11am - Mattzog's Multi-Modal Music Moments
2pm - Shower Karaoke
4pm - Leanna's Meow Music
6pm - Bibi's J-Pop
8pm - John Jolley & Quasar
2am - Late night sounds

Thursday DJ Sets
8am - Metal Mornings
11am - Mattzog's Multi-Modal Music Moments
2pm - Shower Karaoke
4pm - Klagor's Set of Sadness
6pm - Burner Jeopardy
7pm - Bibi's Y2K Dance Party
9pm - Tim's Breakcore/Techstep
10pm - John Jolley & Quasar
2am - Late night sounds

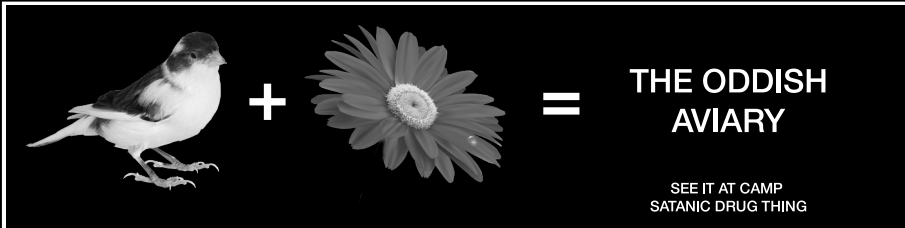
Friday DJ Sets
8am - Metal Mornings
11am - Mattzog's Multi-Modal Music Moments
2pm - Shower Karaoke
4pm - Quasar & John Jolley: Spy Music & Martinis
6pm - DJ Tank Girl's Punk Rock Playground
7pm - DJ Tank Girl's Release the Bats
8pm - Edgar/Bibi's Goth/Synthwave
10pm - Edgar & John Jolley Do Techno
2am - Bibi/Zog's ASMR

Saturday DJ Sets
8am - Metal Mornings
11am - Mattzog's Multi-Modal Music Moments
2pm - Shower Karaoke
4pm - Leanna's Satan Music
6pm - John Jolley, Quasar, Edgar: Terrible Threes
10pm - John Jolley & Quasar
2am - Late night sounds

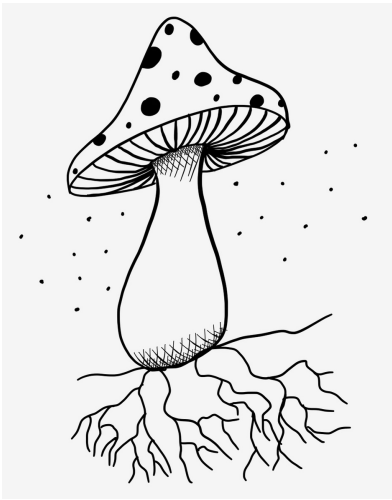
Sunday
Nothing. Help us pack?

LEAVE CONFESSION
RECEIVE SHINY GEM
FEEL RENEWED

THE CROWFESSIONAL CONFESSIONAL
AT CAMP SATANIC DRUG THING
"THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN YOUTOPIA CONFESSING"



OUR OPINIONS



Op-Ed: Lessons From The Year Of The Mushroom

By Ferry Circle

Did you know that each year is bestowed a fruit as a namesake? It's true. I'm told the Year of the Pineapple and Year of the Strawberry were particularly good years. But this year was a little different. This year's fruit wasn't named after a flower's swollen ovary, but after the fruiting body of mycelial funga. Representing community, the Year of the Mushroom brings renewed growth, steady progress, and magic.

Lesson 1, The Mycelial Network: When it rains we see the fruiting bodies of various fungi. Mushrooms. But underneath the soil lies a vast network of mycelium, the fibers and strands that actually make up mushrooms. Mycelium digs deep into the soil and spans entire areas, often co-existing with tree roots and working together with the flora to transport nutrients. In this same way, so too can we build our networks, share resources and obligations alike, and grow stronger as a community. For one to thrive, the entire neighborhood must be healthy. Band together, celebrate each other, and build up from the bottom.

Lesson 2, Hyphae: The name for the actual strands and filaments that make up mycelium is hyphae, singular hypha. When the fungi grow, they extend and branch hypha by hypha. The progress is slow, but steady, increasing exponentially until one cell becomes visible to our eyes. You can even break it all up and when it settles, the hyphae will reconnect, rebuild, and recolonize its substrate. A lesson for us to remember that growth may be slow, but with commitment and resiliency, our growth will also be visible to those around us. Have faith in yourself and trust the process.

Lesson 3, Mutants: When we think of mushrooms, most of us picture the typical cap and stem mushroom. Although mushrooms come in many shapes, even these well known cap and stem bodies can mutate. Often, it makes them slower and more susceptible to contamination from other fungi or bacteria. Despite this, these mutants are often the most prized. Coming in unique colors and shapes, with deeper blues and wavy caps, or looking altogether like a brain, they become so coveted that we instead call them Exotics. You just need to learn to care for them appropriately. If you've ever felt different, alone, or like an odd mutant, just remember that to somebody out there, you are an exotic treasure.

Lesson 4, Magic: The magic of mushrooms can be fickle. At times overwhelming, barely noticeable at others, and sometimes bringing an upset stomach. Somehow, it always seems to know what you need. YOU know what you need. The magic was inside of us all along.



Op-Ed: Leave Me the Fuck Alone

By Tara N. Tula

Listen, this is hard for me to write. Like literally, my spider brain is tiny. It's about the size of an apple seed. It's hard for me to form words, much less sentences, so you can probably tell that based on the effort I'm exerting this is preeeeeetty important to me.

Leave us the fuck alone.

Seriously, I'm sure it's fucking amazing to see a "giant spider" that's walking about out here in the wild unexplored frontier 45-minutes east of your house, but c'mon, just let us live. We got stuff to do, animals to kill and eat, and possibly a mate to find if it's a dude spider you're looking at. That mate finding thing might be pretty urgent too cause the guy spiders die pretty young.

Btw, did you know female tarantulas can live to be like 40? It's true. It's possible that the spider you're harassing is old enough to phonebank for Mondale. I digress though.

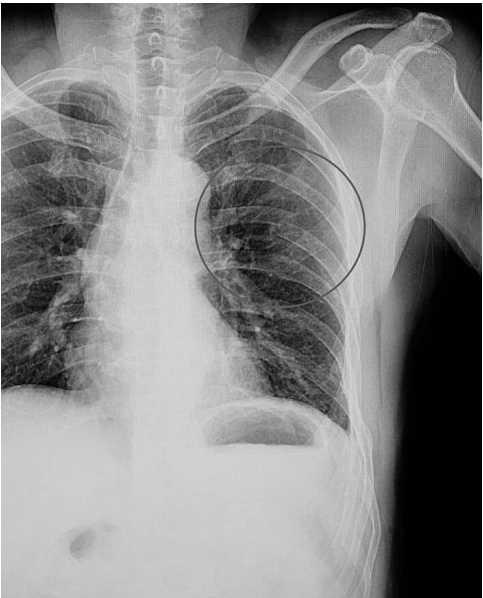
First of all leaving us alone is in both of our favors because we're covered in toxic spines and got a venom for our bites. We're kinda saving both the spines and the venom for our many actual predators and don't want to waste it on some drunk jagoff who thinks it's cool to poke wildlife. Those spines take a real long time to grow and if we flick them at you we can't flick them at a bird later, you understand. Well, technically they don't 'grow' at all, we have to make a whole new exoskeleton and then step outside the old one, it's a whole thing...

Oh right, we flick them. I should have made a bigger deal of that, sorry, it's that small brain again. We can take those spines and fling them with our legs. Won't kill you, but it's really unpleasant and can ruin multiple days for you. So you leave us alone we leave you alone.

Because that's all we want, to be left alone. We will never mess with you unprovoked. In fact, we have a lot in common you and us. Like you we just want to sit in our hole for months at a time before hezading out to murder something and eat it while it's still dying, then getting back to check up on our 1000-ish offspring.

So how about we do just that. You don't fuck with us, we don't fuck with you, and everyone gets along just fine. Which mostly puts the responsibility on you, because, again, the brain size thing. Please use yours to leave us the fuck alone.

Thanks.



Op-Ed: Safety Last

By Zog's Broken Rib

Today's youtes have gone soft, they put safety third, second, or even first instead of in its rightful place like older, cooler burners do: Last. These wimps are too worried about their feelings (pain), and not worried enough about doing the crucial work of building a rickety shade structure or trash-art masterpiece at a weeklong desert bacchanal needed to birth injuries like me, the real and actual broken rib that's currently writing this.

They're more concerned about protecting their sexing apparatus than they are about assembling the Nude Reiki Handjobbomassagadome that Weird Rick, the 58 year old Messiah/Dom-daddy from Camp Me-So-Horny drags out twice a year from Encinitas so he can style himself an outsider artist, but WE ALL KNOW, RICK! You've created an equal opportunity molesteria and justified it with bad homilies about body positivity and self acceptance, but the PLAYA AIN'T FOOLED, BUSTER! Meanwhile, little Ms. Afraid-of-Respiratory-Arrest over here is testing their drugs because they're too damn full of themselves to read the back of the ticket and accept that YOU MIGHT DIE! They weren't testing their drugs back on Baker Beach! They weren't AFRAID! They took the burn by the horns and rammed the horns into their soft underbellies and bled out onto the sand in a pagan punk rock celebration and not even death could stop them from living!

Look, you may not want to admit it to yourself or anyone else, but however you're burning is wrong, it's too safe, sanitized... it's not like it used to be. You've commoditized, trivialized, banalized, excluded and bought your way into another consensus reality mindwank. You may as well have camped out inside Meow Wolf corporate headquarters for a week, interning with the Director of Content Strategy during summer break! You wouldn't recognize free thought if it jammed a knitting needle in your peehole! And if you can't handle the truth I'm spittin', you can head over to center camp and hop on the Starlink wifi and send a complaint to YOUR MOMMA because that's the only person with a violin SMALL ENOUGH to hold your tears! Accept the danger, take a little risk, what's the worst that can happen? Roll the dice, pay your dues and take a swing! The only thing to fear is fear itself, but also death and dismemberment, so remember when you're tumbling out of a dangerously under-engineered art car, YOU DID THIS TO YOURSELF when you could've DONE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE. You've no one to blame, and even if you did, it wouldn't stand up in court, so GET OUT THERE and take life by the juggalo! Shit in the filthiest porto you can find and don't disinfect afterward!

FUCK YR BURN AND BREAK MORE BONES!

MORE OF OUR OPINIONS

I HATE BURNING MAN

by John Jolley

“Curiouser & Curiouser”—really, folks? There have been some deeply unfortunate Burning Man themes (Cargo Cult was certainly cringe) as well as the just plain uninspired (take your pick!) but the “Alice in Wonderland” theme this year may have been the blandest I’ve attended to date. Predictably, despite some mild concessions to the theme (lots of top hats, a few rabbits here and there), nearly everyone happily ignored it and went about their usual business - volunteering, rushing around on bicycles, climbing things, cooking meals, dressing up, performing & participating. Some spent their time on playa modestly tending to their civic responsibilities; others radically expressed themselves in exhibitions of decadence and depravity. Which is all to say; a pretty average burn! Highlights included seeing old friends, making new ones, and getting to help strike camp during severe white out conditions (I’d rate Monday’s sandstorm a solid 8 out of 10—nice and strong, impressive duration!). Not my worst burn, not my best—right down the middle for me, I’d say.

That’s right; you’ve made it to the obligatory “jaded after-burn report” column! If you’ve read one of these in a burner rag, you’ve read ‘em all—that being said, I welcome you, dear reader, to Stay Salty’s inaugural and contractually required editorial missive, “I HATE BURNING MAN”! You can expect bad advice, lukewarm takes, anecdotal observations, and plenty of SALT; if you don’t like it, you don’t have to fucking read it! Let’s begin.

If I were to rank the things I hate most about Burning Man—and I’m about to—the social jockeying about “who’s been going the longest” and “who’s been the most times” might not be at the top of my list... but I’m going to spend some time complaining about it regardless. There will always be the OG royalty—see the overwhelmingly fawning/adorative interview with “Danger Ranger” in this year’s Black Rock Beacon—but even deep below the upper echelon of folks going every year since the 80s, there’s a social “pecking order”. For the most part, newer participants aren’t exposed to much evidence of this social hierarchy; however, the more often you go, the more you tend to notice that the folks who get burn permits are friends with the people who approve them and that the abundance of private portos increases the closer you get to esplanade. Eventually, you might even develop a sneaking suspicion that those “OG” burners (if not BORG members themselves!) are hanging out in exclusive turn-key camps with those exorbitantly wealthy participants amongst us.

Which brings me to one of the aspects I hate most about Burning Man: the wealth gap.

Recent BRC census data shows that participants find the most difficult principle to follow is “Decommodification”. The easiest? “Radical Self-Reliance”. Which is to say, for most participants, “Radical Self-Reliance” means throwing money at the problem, and engaging in what some might identify as “conspicuous consumption”—literally the opposite of decommodification—though perhaps this shouldn’t be especially surprising, given that BRC census data from 2023 showed the average yearly income of a Burning Man participant to be over \$148,000 dollars. If Burning Man and BORG-associated regionals are to survive as radically inclusive events, more outreach must be done towards lower income and more diverse demographics. This means reaching out to people you think may be curious about attending, and helping them attend via acculturation, encouragement, and resources! As for my fellow working class folk who have already miraculously made it out to YOUTopia and gotten your sweaty fingers on this fine publication, I have the following advice:

1) Go to Burning Man. I know, I know, “I HATE BURNING MAN”, but, hear me out! It’s my understanding that the majority of YOUTopia organizers and volunteers (to say nothing of YOUTopia participants) have never been to the “big burn”, and I can’t stress enough how important getting yourself out there is to maintaining

the beating heart of this cultural phenomenon. Find some local art to sign up to support in the months leading up to the burn; alternatively, invest in a ticket and spend some time at gate or elsewhere, getting you a cheaper or even comped ticket next year. Apply for low income tickets. If you don’t need a low income ticket, PLEASE DO NOT APPLY FOR ONE (this goes for YOUTopia participants as well—there are only so many to give out). But for those of you who can afford a full price ticket: apply for a volunteer shift, save up, and get on playa. It’s crucial to have you out there, so we can start correcting the disease that’s rotting and gentrifying the heart of this community so many of us hold dear. Don’t fret if you’re unable to find a camp to stay with; open camping is truly a blast.

2) If you are a chef/driver/server/etc: PLEASE DO NOT OFFER YOUR SERVICES FOR PAY. You, the “hired help”, are just as responsible as the folks who pay you to undermine our principles - and while I know it’s hard to say no to that bag of money, I deeply implore you to do so. Decommodification and radical self-reliance are crucial aspects of our community. Please, please, PLEASE don’t pick up the slack for some big tech head honcho because they’re paying you to be out there. Find another way to get on playa, and aside from helping keep the event decommodified, you may just find you have a better time, both out there and with the new people you meet & reconnect with upon your return. Which is all to say, if you’re really into the scene here at YOUTopia, you owe it to yourself to get out to Black Rock City and find out what it’s all about. Otherwise, you may as well stick to more exploitative, commodified parties - Off The Grid, Desert Hearts, and Lightning in a Bottle may be more your speed!

Which brings us, finally, to ten things I hate about Burning Man. Let’s have a listicle!

- Rape Culture
- The Airport
- Turn-Key Camps
- The Wealth Gap
- “Hired Help”
- Social Media “Influencers”
- DJ Lineups
- Burnout
- Cops
- Tech House

Now, I don’t have the space to address each of these issues head on, and I’ve already touched on a few of them, so I’ll just pick one to close out with: Burnout. There are as many ways to address it as there are ways to experience it, so I’ll limit my commentary to my own experience. While on playa, or even at YOUTopia, I tend to take it pretty easy: I like to lounge around at camp, read a book (or the local paper!), and really make sure I’m fully taking advantage of my vacation. While some may find this approach may lead to feelings of FOMO, I think it’s absolutely crucial for every participant to check in regularly with themselves, determine if they are overextended, and if so, take a break from whatever they think they’re supposed to be doing and relax! If you’re like me—and I know I am—you may often find yourself returning from a festival to a preponderance of further events on your calendar, making this especially important.

That nagging feeling of exhaustion, of just needing to push through your next several months of engagements or responsibilities so you can return to your peaceful, boring, normal life, is one of the first signs of serious burnout. Make sure to allow yourself to relax and recharge, and if needed, say no to things! There is no shame in putting your well-being first and foremost in your decision making. A burn, be it locally or at BRC, ought to leave participants feeling inspired and recharged, ready to take on the year ahead with radical ideas and lateral thinking. If that’s not happening for you, that’s ok—but it may be a sign that you need to check in with yourself for signs of burnout, and if needed, take a little time to yourself!

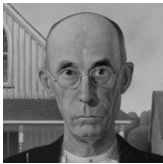
As for me, did I come home inspired and recharged? You bet. I still hate Burning Man!

See you next year.

YOUR OPINIONS

ONLY ONE COLUMN BECAUSE YOU'RE LESS IMPORTANT

Why do you love Metal Mornings?



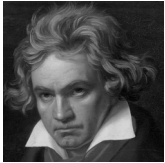
"What? What is it? I haven't heard of it"

- Aberdeen, 35



"I fucking hate it"

- Big "Mike", 46



"I requested Pantera and got a lecture about how

problematic Phil Anselmo is instead"

- Chungus, 50



"They were playing Blue Oyster Cult. Blue Oyster Cult isn't even metal, right?"

Oh, make sure you write the name with the umlauts. And don't quote this part"

- Jöhn, 63



"It's fine, but it's too early."

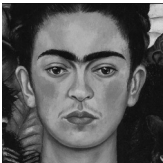
- Moonshot, 72



"I hated that other than Thy Catafalque they didn't play any Hungarian metal. Oh,

and Ektomorf. And Tormentor. But other than that, none"

- "Viktor" Orban, 84



"I just don't think that music about sex, drugs, and

partying belongs at Youtopia"

- Vesper, 94



"It's too loud. I've been dead for 15 years and I

could still hear it"

- Corpus, 109

A PORTO SPARKLY

A Short Story by Kelly Lagor

I’m being followed. The echoes of relentless footsteps find me on this empty street, and their intent crawls on my skin like bugs under my coat, which I pull closer around me. I hurry along as the street darkens before I come to an intersection. To one side, there’s a low building, all shuttered and broken windows. To the other, a string of row houses extends into the night. Before me, more empty street. On me, the bugs promise a terrible knowledge.

I don’t want to be here, wherever this is, that much I know. The footsteps grow closer. The pavement under my feet trembles with them. I’m overwhelmed by a feeling of half-remembering, and an anxious twist in my guts tells me I must choose. I could run, or confront, or do anything but stand here, but choosing makes this real.

A car approaches from behind. As it pulls up beside me, I see it is on fire - a seething red flickering upwards from its frame. It turns its headlights towards me, dragging them over the wet concrete, up the broken curb at my feet, until it looks me straight in the eye. “What do you want to do now?” it asks me.

The footsteps are so loud now, the car’s question so inexplicable, when I feel a breeze’s cold fingers wraps around my neck, I choose.

The first rowhouse is locked. The next, though, opens, and I slip inside and bar the door. The footsteps reach a frantic crescendo before suddenly stopping. As their absence swells, my heart begins to forget.

The room I’m in is small, and a dimly strobing light suffuses from the walls. A black upholstered chair sits at the far end of the room. Beside both, a winding staircase beckons towards a darkened upstairs. To my left, a darkened window. Spartan would be too baroque a term to describe its furnishings, but I don’t need much from it, just another moment to forget.

In the quiet, I become aware of the sound of my own heartbeat carrying on in equally relentless fashion. It makes me suddenly vertiginous. The more I listen, the more responsible for each beat I consciously become. It’s a responsibility I don’t want. I resent the anxious moments between beats, for fear the next won’t come. This is folly, so I focus on each beat instead of the space around it until a feeling of solidity returns. Then I realize there’s a smell.

Is it... brimstone?

The only thing in here is the chair, so I take a step towards it. As I do it takes a step towards me and bangs me in the shin. The smell is stronger now. What is this place?

My heartbeat grows louder still as my fingers reach for the black fabric of the chair’s seat, only for them to pass through it. Another wave of vertigo makes my bowels clench. There’s no there there, and now that I’m closer, I detect something sickly beneath it, a sweetness that pulls my attention down, down, down, as the darkness reaches up to welcome me.

Terrified, I jerk upright and turn to run, but the door is now right behind me, like the entire room is urging me into that abyss. I grapple at the door to find no knob. I push on it. It does not give. There must be some way out. I look up the stairs, but at their end is only a ceiling.

I turn to the window and find someone standing in it. My mouth goes dry. I know now it’s not the walls that softly glow, but them. Beneath the light, they are made of oily, writhing shadows. I back into the door. when I remember the window. What separates us is a single fragile pane of glass that could break as easily as this room is breaking me.

I know they’re the one who’s been following me.

My heart beats so fast I’m certain my last will come soon. I press my fingers to my neck to regain a fleeting sense of control, when I realize this is not my heartbeat, but theirs beating with the frantic cadence of excitement.

The abyss is the only way out. I struggle out of my coat and let it fall around my feet. The room’s light intensifies, and I know to escape I must become a shadow. I find the zipper at my neck and peel off my skin. It’s awkward in so cramped a space, but as I pull the hair from my head and step out of my legs, my own light pooled around my feet, I hear something clunk hollowly against the floor. My phone.

Greedy for it, I pick it up, it’s light momentarily blinding. I tell it to call my best friend, but I have no bars. Defeated, I kneel before the abyss. The oily thing watches me, heart thrumming, and I know now the darkness is not an escape, but a giving up.

Suddenly, I hear my name. It’s my best friend. I bring my signal-less phone to my ear and say my friend’s name over and over as I stand and knock something on the door free with my back. The door opens behind me, and I fall into the sweet-smelling night.

My friend is here! Helping me stand!

The burning car stands behind her, but I see now it’s not a burning car, but art car with red then yellow then orange strobing LEDs chasing each other around its frame. It’s blasting aggressive trance music as it waits for its driver. I look back at the rowhouse to find it’s only a porto, its seat up, with a urinal twisting up one side, and a small, scuffed mirror on the other.

My friend retrieves my coat and my pelican onesie from the porto’s floor, it’s embedded lights cheerfully strobing through their rainbow of colors, and says as they drape both over their arm, “Why are you being so weird?”

I now recognize what the feeling in my guts is, what it’s been this whole time, and I realize back in the Porto is where I need to be.

After, the rest of the night awaits.

WORD FIND

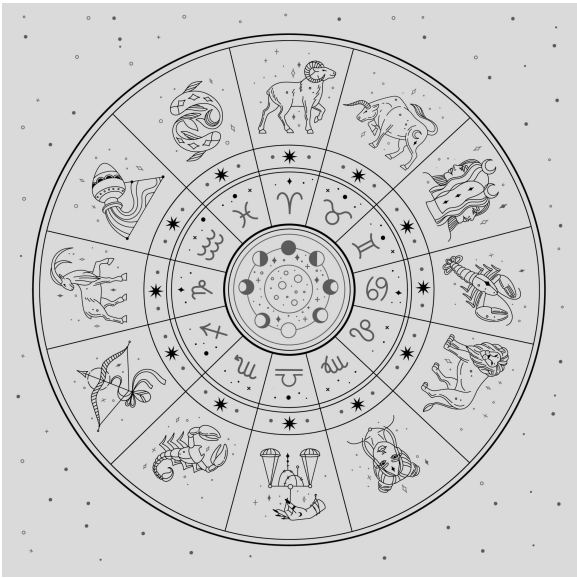
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QNMPRAVENHKKSC EIZHHUDZUSUOICACIP SREPHHAVEANICEDAY!

Find these common everyday words!

- ACCISMUS
- PERSPICACIOUS
- TIMOROUS
- UHTCEARE
- APRICATING
- PREVARICATE
- ZEUGMA
- CAT
- AND
- DWIMMERCRAFTY
- INELUCTABLE
- EKPHRASIS
- LACUNA
- DISSEMBLED
- HEPATIC
- MANDORLA
- PROPTIATORY
- LIMPIDA
- MATHOM
- THE
- ULTRACREPIDARIAN

They can be forwards, backwards, and diagonal.

HOROSCOPES



Your Solipsistic Stars

by Quasar

I received a perfect cut gem of advice from a sagacious soul before this year’s big burn. They said: Your most important job as a member of a camp is to be a good human, and that flows naturally from taking good care of yourself.

It may seem counter-intuitive, but staying self-centered at YOUtopia is an excellent path toward making sure you are the best possible citizen of this temporary city. The tranquility that flows from self-reliance translates to fellow Participants.

To that end, these horoscopes are meant to encourage you to be more selfish, in the nicest possible way—*An it harm none, do what thou wilt*—that is, be hedonistic, but don’t be an asshat.

As an added bonus, I’ve included karaoke pairings for your YOUtopian season, selections intended to be cathartic, and guaranteed to delight nobody—but as long as *you* enjoy the singing, that’s the only damn thing that matters.

Solipsism is its own reward!

ARIES

With the supercharged Full Moon in your sign, you may be firing on way too many cylinders! Find a camp or a dancefloor where you can burn off excess energy so you don’t channel it in shitty ways—Dodgeball Addiction might be a good bet. This is prime time to prioritize your needs, but doing so with respect for your surrounding weirdos will take you to better places. Consider a cosmetically transformative experience: yep, go ahead and let some YOUtopian rando cut ya some fresh bangs.

Karaoke Pairing: “I Believe in a Thing Called Love” by The Darkness

TAURUS

Taurus, giving in to your most slothful of tendencies this YOUtopia may yield toothsome spiritual fruit. Enjoy sumptuous foods, good music, gifts of bodywork (massages at Deep Sea Kingdom!), a languid nature walk amongst the Resort’s flora and fauna (but *watch out for snakes*). The more viscerally secure you are, the better equipped you’ll be to shed any unwanted soul-weight, when the time is ripe. Saturday is well-augured for a balming visit to the Temple or the

Crowfessional Confessional at Satanic Drug Thing.

Karaoke Song: “Feeling Good” by Nina Simone

GEMINI

Ebullient Jupiter is half-way through a year-long residency in Gemini, so your celestial domain is *lit*. Use this empyrean oomph to conceive new schemes, or to incisively revamp existing projects, the better to enhance your soul’s quintessence. Your starstuff-seeded luster may attract would-be co-conspirators like moths to a flame. Of the folks who come a-courtin’, retain only those who truly grok the notions swirling about your intrinsically brilliant noggin. Shun the non-believers!

Karaoke Pairing: “Opera Singer” by Cake

CANCER

Since last month, you may have deeply tapped your emotional reservoir in service to mentoring and nurturing your chosen family—perhaps your camp mates. YOUtopia is a great time to shed burdens of responsibility! Find a way to shimmy out of your shell—maybe a cleansing activity like taking to the sauna at Go Banya No Kidding—and crab-walk lustfully towards your desires without compromise. Redraw boundaries against anyone or anything trying to keep you from your hankerings.

Karaoke Pairing: “Hollaback Girl” by Gwen Stefani

LEO

Leo, we all know your reputation as the absolute fucking megastar of whatever show is on. But your time at YOUtopia may lend itself to deep, focused, and atypically solitary introspection. Your lithe feline mind might stretch back to memories of your early life, so if you happen to be here with family or loved ones you have known since you were a shiny young cub, there is big potential for crystal-clear, cordial, progressive, ultimately healing conversations. The NaughTea Cat Café and Meows-Queer-ade might be great places to curl up for an emotional cat-nap as you process.

Karaoke Pairing: “The Lovecats” by The Cure

VIRGO

This is a time when simpler pleasures might really satisfy. You’ve likely sunk a ton of loving attention and tasteful aesthetic curation into making your own personal area, as well as your camp at large, into a beautiful, peaceful, comfortable space. Once everything is well-settled on the home front, though, give yourself full permission to try on a fancy new persona and venture out of camp in search of some fun!

Karaoke Pairing: “Love Shack” by The B-52’s

LIBRA

Libra season highlights the struggle for balance. It’s a ceaseless cosmic dance, embodied in *you*—yes, YOU, you endlessly ambivalent, fence-sitting wildling. The Supermoon is daring you to pry open your psyche and take stock of what you need in long-term relationships. Use this potent moment to finger your fancies and share them, unabashedly, with your partner(s). And if you’re single—stop waffling, don your finest fripperies, and join the revelers in The Cosmic Masquerade!

Karaoke Pairing: “So Alive” by Love and Rockets

SCORPIO

Mercury is romping through your sign, so you may find yourself unusually willing and able to expose and explicate your intense emotional tides. It could feel fiercely dangerous, loosening the infamous Scorpionic death-grip on your self-control, allowing those around you a rare peek beneath your polished carapace—but this brave act of vulnerability could reward you with profound knowledge of your yens and how to best express them for maximum benefit.

Karaoke Pairing: “Fortress” by Pinback

SAGITTARIUS

Venus has just swept into your sign, you comely centaur! Her month-long stay may infuse you with a thirst for shenanigans, both amorous and scholarly. It’s not that you’re shallow; it’s just that you want to experience *everything* right meow! Honestly, a debauched celebration of the arts is a great place to kick off this special edition season of discovery, but try to keep your exploratory pace under an all-out gallop, and don’t rebuff the people in your life that keep you stable (pun intended).

“Cult of Personality” by Living Colour

CAPRICORN

You probably hear this a lot, you industrious sea goat, but you need to relax. YOUtopia is the place to slow your overachieving roll. Your goals in the Default won’t suffer—in fact, a bit of artistic, romantic, or creative self-expression may even enhance your lofty plans for future productivity. Engage in deliberately questionable activities! Go to the Bad Eggs for ideas, or take a workshop at Yes and Improv to gift your neurons a sprightly rewiring. Think of it as part of a balanced spiritual regimen.

Karaoke Pairing: “Blister in the Sun” by Violent Femmes

AQUARIUS

You’re about a month into an extremely auspicious astrological time. You may be brimming with electrifying ideas in many realms: personal, professional, creative, financial. This influence also brings Pink Heart-like levels of compassion and tolerance, so it could well facilitate healing conversations with loved ones. The more that you step out of your comfort zone at this time, the more you will soar. Tending kindly to your body will help optimize this halcyon time—Yoga at The Filament, anyone?

“Stand” by R.E.M.

PISCES

The moon is magnifying your intuitive powers, you spooky psychic fishie. Even though you’re not feeling particularly chatty or articulate, new acquaintances may be drawn to you as they trawl the murkiest depths of their secret selves and lay bare their psychological dross for your analysis. Make sure to reserve some personal time to hunker down and marinate in your own spiritual juices, especially if you encounter stimuli that seem to signify new beginnings. If you’ve had a particularly tough year; things will hopefully feel lighter in the coming months. Plan for great things!

Karaoke Pairing: “Connected” by Stereo MCs

THE COSMIC MASQUERADE



by Group

Hope you're exactly the right amount of high to sit there and overthink about words for like an entire column cause we're about to do a whole lot of ink about this year's theme. It's not my favorite sort of theme -- I'm a sucker for the overly literal ones like "underwater" or "cats" -- while this is more interpretational, but fine let's commit to that bit of it. Let's dig down and overinterpretationalize this sucker and see what sort of antipode bullshit we can climb out in.

Starting at the start: "Cosmic". The cosmic is not of the Earth and colossal in scope. The cosmic is of the universe, and I think you'll find -- as the song goes -- that the universe pretty much covers everything. The theme is of the everything.

And a masquerade is a party where you wear a disguise. A grand ball of the fancy kind. Easy first pass for this interpretation exercise: a Cosmic Masquerade is an otherworldly costume party. Makes sense for a burner culture event. Really almost a meta-theme where you're going to a theme party where the theme is theme parties.

I'm good with that whole meta-theme concept, I've never meta-thing I didn't like.

But there's something else about Masquerades though, isn't there. It's not the sort of red cups, your friends, and running from the cops at 2am harmless fun. It's a cursed mansion, it's *Eyes Wide Shut*, it's sneaking in without an invitation, probably forbidden, there's the plague, Venice, Poe, dead bodies upstairs, and putting cloves in the nose of that giant bird mask to keep you from smelling the bad air.

Is anyone even invited to a masquerade? Feels like every work of fiction everyone is always sneaking into them. No proper protagonist is getting a proper formal invitation to one, they're always dodging guards or forging letters. An invite only party where no one cool is invited, but everyone cool is there anyways.

A Cosmic Masquerade could also be like Jupiter pretending to be Saturn. Rapid dead end though, that train of thought. Leaving that branch alone.

But this is take us to a new thought: to masquerade as someone is to pretend to be them. A doppelganging. It's someone pretending to be you and going about your day like they are you. Now this is a chunky big boy of a branch, let's walk out on this one, hell let's bust out a saw and Bugs Bunny cut us away from the mother-plant cause this branch will probably support us once the tree is gone.

So the Cosmic Masquerade is also the universe pretending to be you. It's a body snatcher who swaps with you while you're here. They're you in the mundane world back on earth, you're them here at the event, cosmically. They're going to work and loading the dishwasher, you're trying to get the stars

to stop spinning and trying to remember which way your tent was, or if you've even remembered to put the tent up before wandering off.

So the universe pretends to be you, what else does that give us? Outer space changeling. Pod people. Labyrinth meets Alien. Yup, definitely some meat on this bone. Or definitely some wood on this branch, metaphor falling apart a bit. But think of it, two Jim Henson style androids, one who always lies and one who sneaks a parasitic life into you. Star Trek red shirt sneaking into the Seelie court. Elfquest x Skrull Invasion crossover event.

Or does it mean that the universe itself is pretending to be something else? And, as we said earlier, since the universe pretty much covers everything, this means it's now everything pretending to be everything. Someone snuck in and replaced the universe with an exact replica. Unnerving but really maybe not that worrisome? As long as they did a god job with the replicas and as long as you go about your business they won't ever suspect you know the truth.

Ok, back to the start real quick. We've picked clean the meaning where it's a masquerade that is cosmic. But that's not the only reading, innit, you could read a theme as a proper sentence too. The cosmic masquerade. Who? The cosmic. What are they doing? Masquerading. The cosmic are masquerading. Sorta like a *Finnegans Wake* thing. The cosmic masquerade. The universal pretend. Gods walk with us in disguises. Dr Manhattan wrapped in an Edgar suit and salsa dancing.

Now this one has a new connotation worth pursuing: it makes us all into outsiders. Hear me out, we each know who we ourselves are, even if just by the process of elimination, but we don't know who the cosmic are amongst us and they could be anyone. They are definitionally beyond us and we can only see them where they choose to make themselves known to us, and they are masquerading as us. Anyone can be one of the cosmic.

An outsider is somehow who is not a part of something and who does not belong, and you can't belong to a group you don't know, and you can't know the cosmic, and especially not when they're disguised. We're kind of back at that slightly creepy thing from earlier, though with a hint of optimism this time, because we know everyone else is in the same mental state as us in this case, as it's the whole universe in disguise.

You see, you don't know who anyone is at a masquerade, but neither can anyone else. We're alone together, we're separately united, we're all individually not invited, but here anyways. Except for the cosmic, but frankly fuck 'em.

I give the theme 4 out of 5 stars but any of them might be something else masquerading as stars, number of real stars unknown.

FAKE ADS

Join us for

THE ORIGINAL

He Olde Shower

Karaoke

est 2017
(There's No Actual Water)

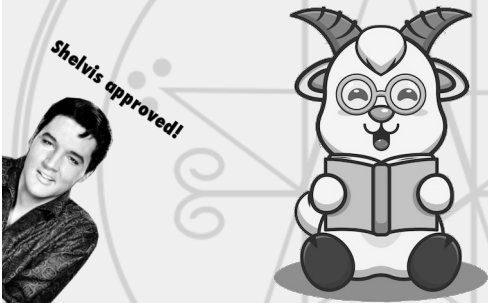
2pm "Every" Day!
At Camp Satanic Drug Thing



Come Check Out

The Little Free Satanic

Drug Thing Library



Great for passing an afternoon or evening!
Keep the books you check out!
Content guaranteed to offend someone, somewhere!

At Camp Satanic Drug Thing

IT'S NOT LITERALLY SATAN

WHY ISN'T ANYONE OFFENDED BY THE DRUG PART?

Camp Satanic Drug Thing. It's from a band t-shirt, ok? There was a Monster Magnet shirt that had "IT'S A SATANIC DRUG THING, YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND" on it, one of us was wearing it at an old Youtopia (remember the ones with the hill and the poison oak? one of those), and someone came up and said "oh man, satan and drugs, that's exactly what my family thinks I do here, they just don't understand it's a positive thing", and that was the moment where the idea was born.

It's a little bit rolling with the idea that this is what people outside think when they're looking in already, a little bit rolling with the idea of it being a thing doesn't require being understood because you already experiencing it and through that you know it's positive, and a bit an old school psychedelic rock reference because Monster Magnet rules.

Ok now please stop emailing in complaints about the camp name, thanks. Save that for our DJing.

WOW A 15,000 WORD CHOOSE-YOUR-OWN-ADVENTURE

THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING TENT (IT'S NOT MISSING, YOU'RE JUST LOST)

ONLY GOOD ENDINGS BUT SOME ARE BETTER



START. You are at an unnamed-for-legal-reasons desert party event and are having a great time wandering about. Unfortunately, you seem to have gotten separated from the rest of your group. Actually, you realize, you are quite lost. Time to take stock of the situation and somehow get back to your tent. You...

- Look for your steps in the dirt to retrace your way back (Go to 38)
- Climb to higher ground and try and spot your tent (Go to 110)

1. "Wait a minute, I have a brilliant idea!" you say to yourself. "I don't need to follow the rules. I can choose to read these in any order and step through the text as I wish. I can just will myself back to the tent."

- No, you can't, that's not how this works (Go to START)
- Yes, you can, that is exactly how this works (Go to 128)

2. The trees embue you and the scorpion with a feeling of an incredible beauty and you both feel a sense of completeness. You thought you were searching for the more-than-perfect beat but really you were searching for peace, and here you found it. From this grove you will hear the wind move, you will see the sky turn, you will smile at the moon each night, and you will be one with it all. It turns out, it wasn't your tent that was missing but a sense of home, and you will build one here in the shade of these delicious trees.

3. Sometimes you need to get all cannibalistic about it. With your new frog allies, you move through the world eating the richest people out there, then distribute their wealth downwards to the workers whose labors they've exploited for so long. You choose to leave the rule in the people's hands. Turns out, the simple act of the masses eating the richest people in the world is sufficient to bring about world peace and a better existence for everyone. Also, the rich are delicious.

4. You settle in and observe the cat kingdom from afar. It's an incredible horizontal society that exists outside of capital-liberalist hegemony, nationalistic arms races, and Marxist dialectics. Instead, it mostly consists of naps, a bunch of pouncing, and a smattering of murder. Quite a bit of murder, actually... But hey, cats gotta eat, right? Having now realized this kingdom has much to offer to humans you come to a dilemma.

- Learn all you can about a specific subject in the cat kingdom so you can bring the knowledge back to humanity (Go to 8)
- Sneak one of the cat society's artifacts out and use it change the world (Go to 114)

5. You can't ignore a crying voice, that wouldn't be very PLUR of you. You scamper into the hole and after sliding down a good deal the last bit of it, you end up in what appears to be a mining tunnel where you find a crying ghost. After a chat and a few hugs, the ghost explains it's crying because a goblin took the ghost's treasure and asks you to help retrieve it. When it points in the direction the goblin lives, you inquire what's in the other direction. The ghost worriedly warns you there's a monster that way and no one who's s gone that way has returned alive.

- Agree to help the ghost and pledge to get the treasure from the goblin (Go to 11)
- Apologize to the ghost but you feel a calling to get rid of the monster and make this tunnel safe for others (Go to 59)

6. Well, you certainly can't think of a more impartial jury than someone who minutes earlier didn't even know this entire judicial system existed. Right. No problem. You agree to judge

their dispute and proceed to hear the advocates plead their cases. Unfortunately, you quickly come to realize that most the evidence is smell-based and that, being human, your sense of smell is a factor of about 100x weaker than these cats', and you become totally lost. When it comes time for you to favor one side over the other, you

- Rule in favor of the calicos (Go to 87)
- Rule in favor of the tortoiseshells (Go to 80)

7. You and the scorpion set up all the lights you can get your hands and claws on and orchestrate an incredible show pointed at the stars. The show has a very unambiguous message: "Hello space aliens, please come here". Soon enough, from space, music blaring, comes a space saucer filled with a surprisingly swarthy crew of space aliens. As they pull closer, you and the scorpion both understand these are music pirates on their musical pirate spaceship. Well, now you have an ethical quandary on your hands:

- You wouldn't download a car (Go to 124)
- You would download a car (Go to 81)

8. There is so much to learn from this colony of cats, they have truly created the perfect society, but you can't take all of it in. It's too much to memorize all of in the necessary detail, so you boil it down to two options: either you learn about the cats' incredible insight and breakthroughs on economic matters, or you learn about the cats' profound advances on sociological matters. You're sure both would have an incredible positive effect on the world back home.

- Study economic knowledge (Go to 33)
- Study sociological knowledge (Go to 53)

9. You study the machinery, trying to understand the relationships of the gears and connections, when a realization comes over you: everything here is off because of a small error. Not, like, philosophically. Rather, everyone in this room is trying to fix the error and its effects on the other modeled space bodies, but in reality, it's all because of this tiny offset with the moon. With a strong push you set it into the correct spot and the solution propagates through the entire model as all the pieces fall into place. Around you, the commotion slowly stops as everyone looks to the astrolabe. It's perfect now. Suddenly the castle rises, and you rise with it. This isn't a castle at all, it turns out, it's a castle-y spaceship, and now that you've fixed their model of the universe it's setting off, its navigation path finally clear. On the downside, you for sure won't find your tent now, but on the bright side you're disguised as a raven and taking off on a space adventure in a flying castle surrounded by mysterious strangers, so things are looking pretty good overall.

10. "I know who you really are," you call out to them, "you're all lizard people!" You get worried looks in return but, like, worried-about-you looks, not you-figured-us-out looks. On second thought, maybe they're not actually lizard people and you just had a really long and confusing night. That's also definitely a possibility. But hey, that seemed to work as an icebreaker and now they're offering to either walk you back to your tent, or take you out to party with them.

- It's been a long night, let's call it and crash (Go to 35)
- The night's just starting, let's party with these not-lizard people (Go to 77)

11. Ok, this ghost is quite sad and getting its treasure back from a goblin sounds like a very reasonable thing to agree to do. You head off down the tunnel and, not long after, do indeed run into a goblin that's busy going about chores. A long conversation (and two cups of tea) later,

you find out there's more to this story than you originally thought. It turns out, you see, the treasure is an engagement ring the ghost gave the goblin, but the goblin has broken off the engagement and does not want to return the ring.

- Well hm, you do see the goblin's point here (Go to 111)
- Well hm, you do see the ghost's point here (Go to 47)

12. You start the process of searching and end up checking every place. Genuinely, you two check *every* place. The perfect beat is no longer here on Earth which means one of two things: it has either been moved up into the heavens, or down into the underworld. You start to understand the weight of the situation now, a perfect beat is something that, through its perfection, carries a responsibility. You and the scorpion, now bonded in this geas, have to travel to the immortal planes to retrieve it before it can be misused.

- Search the heavens (Go to 84)
- Search the underworld (Go to 43)

13. A crow disguise? How absurd. From the available stuff here, you quickly construct a proper raven disguise and easily blend in amongst the others. It seems this castle stores a lot of hidden knowledge the others here use in secretive, and perhaps even almost occult, ways. This is your chance to learn something that just may help you find your tent again -- which was the whole point of this unexpected outing you're on, if I may remind you. Now, which room will you seek this tent-related knowledge in?

- Clearly in the observatory where the astrolabe is (Go to 41)
- Clearly in the library where the books are (Go to 54)

14. You crack open the doors and see a raucous festivity well underway. A magical sensation sweeps over you. In moments you forget everything from before. This party simply is, was, and ever will be. This is the Ur-Party you've been searching for your entire life, and you already know you will devote yourself entirely to it, but in what capacity?

- join the party as guest (Go to 20)
- join the party working behind the scenes (Go to 106)

15. You bring back a white yam and it's not a huge success with the parapets. Turns out it's quite bitter, stringy, and unpleasant. In fact these parapets decide they need to fly down to the local well and wash the aftertaste away with some water. You did, however, brought them something, and they do appreciate the thought, so they ask if you want a ride down back to your tent -- which you luckily spot soon after takeoff. And so, the night wraps up with you crawling in for some good morning's sleep, and you absolutely still definitely know what a parapet is.

16. No need to get all cannibalistic about it, let's just secretly seize control of all systems of governance and wield the monopoly of violence in a better way. You and your new friends, the secret frog people, work from the shadows as a new ruling class that helps implement a better and more equitable set of laws for everyone. Everyone is happy with the new results, and you even locate your tent, eventually.

17. The more-than-perfect beat can't be performed for humans, but you're not going to let that stop you. You will play it on the planets, you will play it on the stars, and you will play it on the fabric of the universe. Everyone in the universe will hear it, even if they can't fully understand it. You and the scorpion ask to borrow

the space aliens' spaceship real quick, then zoom off to start playing the more-than-perfect music on the planets. With slight and complex gravity tugs, you start resonating between them until they buzz with the melody, which slowly shakes the sun and, eventually, the entire galactic neighborhood. It will take eons for the music to reach its full potential, but you're not in a hurry. And hopefully by the time it does, humanity (and scorpionity) will be ready for it.

18. Well, maybe you weren't Omlagus Garfungiloops before, but maybe you are now. Maybe our identities are like coats, free to be put on and taken off as we will. Maybe, along with this stranger you just met, you can create this new Omlagus-y self for you. Maybe Omlagus hates seagulls but loves pelicans. Hates tomatoes. Has a superstition about salt. Only wears white shoes. And maybe Omlagus Garfungiloops lives here, in this shack, and not in any tent. Maybe with infinite change comes infinite freedom, and every day is a blank slate. You're not going to be Omlagus Garfungiloops forever, but for now, well... for now you are.

19. You overcome your hesitation and go up to the partygoers. Even in a few sentences of conversation you realize your hunch was right. These people aren't people at all. They're in disguise, just pretending to be human. Their human-y details are almost right, but you pick up on the bits they got wrong. You have to say something, you might be the last line of defense for humanity here. What do you do?

- Accuse them of being lizard people in disguise (Go to 10)
- Accuse them of being frog people in disguise (Go to 90)

20. There's no party without attendees. The party exists so that people can party, and this party must keep existing. You can't explain it, but you know it: it's critical this castle keep existing and that this party goes on, and partying correctly is a task in its own right. You must maintain a good attitude and never let the vibe un-gooden. You are ready for this commitment. In fact, your whole life you've been training for this, and you just didn't know it. But the castle knew. It showed up here when it needed you, specifically, for this reason. You are going to travel with this castle, partying, forever, because it is the only thing that keeps the anti-castle with its anti-party at bay. I realize this is quite late to introduce this cosmic balance concept and the anti-party but, trust me, the anti-castle is quite ominous. You're doing an important job.

21. The God Particle shouldn't be trapped here, but you're not sure it should be given to science either. It should be free to move amongst its own kind. You wait for your chance, then "accidentally" bump into the cloche, releasing the particle. Oh, a cloche is like one of those upside-down bowls, like a glass cage. I probably should have explained that earlier. Anyways, The God Particle is free now and zooms off, non-interacting right past the other people here. In the commotion, you sneak out of the castle. As you ponder what to do next, you see it peek out from the bushes. It looks like it wants you to follow it. You walk after it and it guides you, unerringly, back to your tent, where it also introduces you to its other God Particle friends. They then zoom away, spinning free into the universe while you crawl into your tent for a well-earned morning rest.

22. One with the night, you will it to the world everywhere. It spreads like spilled ink. It spreads like, uh, a really dark blanket. It spreads like...

um... a dark runny thing that's wet and viscous. Let's move on. Under the peaceful touch of mother Darkness, all come to your realization of the nature of fear being in the self, and not in the world. When the sun returns in what feels like a lifetime later, you feel a new sense of calm and purpose, and you know everyone around you does as well. And in your new calm state of mind, and well-lit environs, it's surprisingly easy to find your tent again and crawl in for a good morning's sleep.

23. You figure the best way to resolve the issue of what to do with the ring after breaking off the engagement is to restart the engagement. This ends up being a lot of work as you sit in on the conversations between the ghost and goblin, help arrange dates, and generally work on them reestablishing their trust with each other. But it all works out well in the end. Their relationship rekindles, and you become a good friend, moving in and living in their cave granny flat. Sometimes, it turns out, the real tent is the friendships you find along the way.

24. You go up to speak to the giant fungi and soon learn that their society is amazingly complex, with the vast majority of them living underground as root-like networks of mycelium, and the large stem-and-cap structures above ground are just the fruits, like apples from an apple tree. You quickly learn their chemical-based language (though your accent is pretty terrible), learn to harmonize yourself with their global colony speech, and learn they have long ago joined into a single fungal dasein of all mushrooms.

- Stay here and learn the full secrets of the mycelium mind (Go to 70)
- Collect some of the spores of the giant mushroom hivemind and bring them back to the surface (Go to 52)

25. Of course you'll talk to the people. Why would you follow a cat? Cats don't live in tents usually, anyways. You double your speed towards these people but then, as you catch up closer, you realize something is genuinely off here. Even at this distance, you can tell they have unusually short digestive tracks. Hm. Ok. That's probably suspicious... Or is it? You haven't met many people with digestive tracks this short before, but maybe it's harmless and maybe makes them even better at knowing where tents are?

- It probably does make them better at knowing where tents are, that's just common-sense biology. Go talk to them (Go to 19)
- No, this is all too suspicious. Back away and hide in the shadows before they spot you (Go to 100)

26. Wait, what? You're going to move in with it? With the demon? How are you even going to get past the bars of the cell? Oh, they're demon-sized and you're quite a bit smaller. But now what? I guess you don't need to find the tent if you just live here, and I guess it's not technically being imprisoned if you can leave anytime you want. Well, in any case you do move in, and you and the demon end up developing a pretty amicable coexistence in a roommate kind of way. Sure, you have some disagreements here and there, but in general it's just nice to have someone in your life.

27. You think to yourself that, sure, capitalism is the most efficient way to do things, but is the pursuit of efficiency really the thing we must be doing? Or is it maybe the other way around, and in seeking endless improvement we dehumanize ourselves and others? Maybe the right way to treat the anxiety we all feel isn't by tackling the anxiety itself, but its cause: capitalism. And now you have a handful of spores that can fix this. As they spread through the world, you create a conscious mind of a size the planet has never experienced, and with it, you create a new economy - one based on mycelium networks which send resources to where they're needed, not to those who are most powerful. Sure, your new mushroom-y economic system is not quite as efficient as capitalism was, but it turns out, once you distribute the goods more equitably, everyone can still have enough without the endless pursuit of growth. As a bonus, we pull ourselves back from the brink of ecological collapse, and everything has a nice earth-y umami-y sort of smell to boot.

28. You explain to the goblin that under the laws of the state of California -- which is where you are, have I forgotten to mention this anywhere else in the adventure? You're in California. Dang. I feel like this could have been useful to you earlier -- ...under the laws of the state of California rings must be returned to the giver,

unless the giver broke off the engagement. The goblin, being a famously law-abiding sort, sees your point and agrees that you should return the ring. The situation is resolved amicably and with deference to the local laws here in California, where the story took place all along. As a thank you, the ghost and goblin both help you out of the cave and send you towards the tent, where you arrive in time to get a good morning's rest.

29. You approach the giant scorpion, and it explains its predicament to you. It has recently come up with the perfect beat, just absolutely perfect in every way, but unfortunately the beat has gone missing. This is quite a bit like your predicament, come to think of it, except you have a tent that's gone missing. Or at least one you wandered off from and can't find again. Either way, you're clearly in a similar situation and helping the scorpion seems like a good way to also, in some way, help yourself. So, what's your idea here?

- Suggest to the scorpion that maybe it should write a new perfect beat (Go to 76)
- Help the scorpion find the missing perfect beat (Go to 12)

30. You relax the tight grip you hold on your consciousness and the voice that is you in your own mind and... and actually that's kind of it for 'you'. It's now 'you', plural. Unfortunately, in English, it's the same pronoun, so it's not very dramatic written out, but you're now every mushroom that ever was, is, and ever will be. You are every life forms that has died and all the thoughts they took with them. You are the afterlife of everything. As all living things die, they slowly become more you.

31. Climbing things you shouldn't be climbing is basically half the entertainment at these events, of course this is the best way to go. No windows in the castle, but the stones are rough and have great handholds and foot... footholds? Let's go with footholds. Anyways point is you get to the top just fine. And up on the top you find the parapets. They're great, shapely, a good healthy size, and if you allow yourself a flight of fancy, maybe look a bit hungry? Unfortunately, you can't see your tent in any direction, you must not be quite high enough.

- Of course, yes, parapets, you know what those are. Maybe fetch some food for them? (Go to 55)
- No, stop getting distracted, let's climb the tallest tower in here and look from there (Go to 71)

32. You inform the angels you're going to break the strikers and the scorpion out of jail. They panic. "No one has ever escaped from heaven prison," they explain. Yes, but no one has ever had your plan. You lead the angels to the jail and, face-to-face with the jailers, explain to them that the jailers' interests actually lie with the strikers, not the management. A murmur runs through the prison as the jailers discuss this amongst themselves. Their conditions are also pretty bad, their pay low, and their hours long... Why are they, in fact, holding these strikers in prison? Soon the jailers also join the picket line, and slowly does the rest of heaven's law enforcement angels. Faced with a complete shift of power dynamics, the management buckles and steps down. A new, worker-based government is elected in heaven, with you and the scorpion on the committee. Well, as they say, better to rule in heaven than to sleep in tent.

33. After studying the cats' economic setup, you think you have a better grasp of how it can be applied to human society. You sneak back to the human world, unspotted. You compile your notes and self-publish your research as the phenomenal blockbuster, Not Just Dead Rodents: How Cat-like Gifting Can Fix Our Economy. Its success leads to a subtle but important shift in human priorities as we stop looking at the weakest among us as a source of surplus labor for our own benefit, but instead look for opportunities to improve their lives without expecting anything in return. And (as the book makes very clear) not just by leaving them dead rodents.

34. You grab a water dish from the outskirts of the village and sprint for the hills. And what a marvel this dish is, it seems to produce good clean water by itself, though very slowly. It turns out cats in the wild get most of the water they need from the blood of the things they murder and eat. Still, with this technology, you'll be able to bring clean drinking water (very slowly) to the world. Or at least to their cats. As a bonus, it keeps you very slightly hydrated as you stumble back to human world and find your tent, passing out in time for a good morning's rest.

35. You know, yeah, let's call it a night. How silly you were being. This is what happens when you stay up too late and start feeling paranoid. And, in a lucky break, it turns out these helpful folks already know where your tent is, what your name is, and many other details about your life that are not at all suspicious. With a wave of goodbye and a wink of their third eyelid they bid you farewell, and you climb into your tent to get a good morning's sleep.

36. You sneak around pretending to be closely inspecting a spot in the wall, and when everyone is busy doing something else, you quickly swipe the God Particle and hide it in your fanny pack. Oh, also you have a fanny pack (it hasn't come up before). It looks great with your crow disguise. You're mostly out of the castle when the alarm rings and you manage to sneak out the large doors before you're spotted. You rapidly make your way to the local science-y building place where the particle is carefully removed from your fanny pack and stow it somewhere for safe-keeping. After all, it's responsible for all mass in the universe. You did a great service today, not just for science, but for all matter in existence. That's definitely worth missing a morning's sleep.

37. The body is a lie and a deception, you realize. Or rather, your mind realizes, which is the part that matters. You are the mind, not the physical meat that surrounds your consciousness. The climb slowly becomes painless. The pain was an illusion and you've discarded it. You are now spirit. Stair by stair you draw closer to becoming eternal form that experiences only the divine and timeless. You climb, and as you climb you think, and through thinking you are. With each step you draw closer to uniting the self (your real self) and the infinite.

38. Right, no need to make this complicated. Clearly you walked here, so clearly you can walk back. And, in fact, there are your footsteps. Probably yours, at least, and not any of the other hundreds of people milling about here. Right, off you go. After fifteen minutes of late-night stumbling, you somehow arrive at the entrance to a cave in the cliffside you've never seen before, which is weird. There's also a windy path that heads along the outskirts of the festival and there seems to be some movement out that way.

- Let's try the cave, maybe it's a tunnel shortcut to your tent (Go to 73)
- Let's try that outskirts path and maybe you can ask one of the things moving there where your tent is (Go to 64)

39. Sword in hand, you step into the monster's lair. The creature does a three-point turn to face you, eyes glowing in the darkness. Now comes the moment of truth, what are you going to do now?

- Battle the monster with the sword (Go to 72)
- Wait, wasn't this about finding your tent? Ask the monster, maybe the monster knows where your tent is (Go to 51)

40. You decide to see what the crafty Cardinal is up to and where exactly he is taking the perfect beat. It turns out, he had something truly insidious in mind: he has taken the perfect beat to a crowd of underworld revelers and has combined it with the most hellish of all musics -- played at every occasion here in the underworld -- Vocal House. You and the scorpion are both shaken to your cores by his act. Such a blasphemy might be enough to shake the foundations of the underworld itself.

- Steal the beat back before it's too late (Go to 97)
- Let his plan unfold and let the planes of hell tremble (Go to 57)

41. You sneak into the beautiful observatory and see a colossal astrolabe that fills the entire room, precisely positioning the nearby solar system objects in exquisite detail. It moves silently, tiny gears spinning at great speeds in order to move the giant ones slowly, but oh so precisely. But, hm, maybe not entirely accurately. You notice that... yes... without a doubt... the moon is a tiny bit off in this model. Just a small hair, but enough for your eye to notice. You feel a need to fix it.

- Adjust the machinery (Go to 9)
- The machinery looks complicated, adjust only the moon (Go to 61)

42. Look, food goes in cellars. Everyone knows that. You definitely do, just like you definitely know what a parapet is, and you definitely know food goes in cellars. You cruise through the empty halls of the castle (everyone seems to be at the party) before you find access to the underground level. Armed with your porta-potty-

trip flashlight, you look around the dark cellar. It seems it's filled with... yams? Multiple kinds at that.

- bring back a purple yam (Go to 50)
- bring back a white yam (Go to 15)

43. You have a suspicion that the forces from below are more likely to have taken the perfect beat than not. The scorpion agrees and the two of you walk down into the underworld. You search amongst the lakes of fire, the infinite pits of the damned, and the forests of impaled former landlords, when suddenly a sound comes to you. A perfect sound. You and the scorpion both turn to see the nefarious Cardinal Richelieu walking by, phone blasting at full volume, and (no doubt about it) the perfect beat playing on it. The fallen dastardly French minister has somehow got his hands on the prefect beat and, knowing him, is definitely intending to use it to advance his malicious manipulations

- immediately walk up and accuse the Cardinal of stealing the perfect beat (Go to 58)
- tail the Cardinal first and figure out what his plan is (Go to 40)

44. Light means one thing: people. And where there's people, there's tents. Follow the light, obviously. So, you do, and a long walk later you approach a shack with a light bulb on a wire. A nice person sees you come up and asks, "Hey, are you Omlagus Garfungiloops?" To be clear, you are not, jumping in as narrator real quick. You are many things to many people, but none of them are Omlagus Garfungiloops.

- Explain to the person you are not Omlagus Garfungiloops and just need to find your tent (Go to 118)
- Begin a new life as Omlagus Garfungiloops (Go to 18)

45. Let's minimize the amount of distractions here. Let's just climb the tower, get a good look around, and get out of here. So you start climbing. And climbing. And even more climbing. It really didn't look this tall from the outside. You've never been this tired before. With each step you feel the relationship between you and your body slowly deconstructing -- the Cartesian braid slowly unraveling. Maybe the tent doesn't matter? Maybe your body doesn't matter? Maybe you've been searching for the wrong thing your whole life?

- Yes, mortify your flesh, become an ascetic in this tower (Go to 37)
- No, reintegrate! Reintegrate! (Go to 109)

46. Meet them where they are, that's your motto. You start learning about the dinosaur society and what you discover is quite shocking. The richest 0.1% of the dinosaurs control almost all the wealth, and through that exploit the masses. Who could possibly live like that? Your conscience tells you that you have to do something about it, but you're not sure what.

- Unionize the dinosaurs in order to put them in a better bargaining position and improve their lives (Go to 68)
- Start a revolutionary vanguard and lead the dinosaurs in an overthrow of their current establishment (Go to 96)

47. The goblin broke off the engagement. While, admittedly, the situation is a bit messy, the ring should probably go back to the ghost. It might be some haunted heirloom or something, and you know how ghosts can be. Now the question is how to go about doing this...

- Convince the goblin to return the ring (Go to 28)
- Try and restore their relationship (Go to 23)

48. What do you mean by "Look for a party"? You're the one with the crew of dinos ready to start getting down. You are the party. Soon, with some stomping, some honking, some roaring, and some tailswooping about, you all got yourself a proper little event. Unsurprisingly, when hanging out with dinosaurs, everyone else in the area soon joins your prehistoric shindig as well. Turns out you don't need loudspeakers or even lights when you've got some good vibes and a 12-ton herbivore tap-dancing. Your wild little event runs late into the night before -- with the dinos' help -- you stumble back to your tent for a good morning's sleep.

49. You calm the angels down and proceed to trial. Heaven's press expect this to be a textbook conviction -- two outsiders just waltzed in, started an illegal strike, and got arrested. What defense could they possibly mount? As the trial begins, you simply say to the jury that, yes, the law was broken, but the jurists don't have to vote according to the law. They can realize they serve to gain from the strike if they vote you innocent,

and let the strike continue. The courtroom erupts, the judge demands the jury ignore you, and for your words to be stricken from the record, but when the trial comes to end the verdict is indeed innocent. All are released and the management of heaven is forced to cave to the strike, giving the angels better work conditions. The scorpion stays in heaven as a union leader, and as a thank you, the angels guide you back to your tent, and through some heaven-magic you get back in time to still get a good morning's rest.

50. You bring a purple yam back and it's a phenomenal success with the parapets. They can't get enough of the subtle sweet flavor and starchy texture and are delighted by the vibrant violet hue. The parapets then happily let you climb on their back and carry you around the night sky. You see the entire event from hundreds of feet up, before spotting your tent and having the parapets drop you off nearby. After one last neck scratch, you send them back to the castle walls and crawl into the tent for a good morning's sleep.

51. You 'explain' that you got this sword as a gift and you totally didn't mean to try and stab the monster, and hey, does the monster maybe know how to get back out and maybe give you a quick lift back to your tent? With a sigh, the monster agrees, and you hop on its back. After cruising around the event (at a slow and reasonable speed) you successfully locate your tent, thank the monster, and crawl in for a good morning's sleep.

52. This mushroom mind is incredible, but it seems to be limited to only the world within the cave. You have to bring it to the surface where it can spread and also subsume the mushrooms there. Just imagine what incredible things you will be able to achieve. In fact, now that you think about it there's only one thing you can do that will solve all the world's problems, and that's...

- subvert capitalism (Go to 115)
- overthrow capitalism (Go to 27)

53. You blend in with the cats and study them like some sort of a feline Jane Goodall. Or a human Jane Goodall rather, because she wasn't a chimpanzee. We're digressing, sorry. You carefully monitor their society and come to understand the secret to their happiness and success. It's so simple: naps. It was naps all along. You collate your notes and end up writing and self-publishing a phenomenal book of research called Live to Sleep, Not Sleep to Live. You successfully argue to billions of people we shouldn't look at our sleep as the thing we must do to be productive in our day. No, we must be productive in our day so that we can sleep. And the more we sleep, the happier we are. As the world's eyes open to this fact, or I guess in this metaphor as their eyes close drowsily to this fact, everywhere a more peaceful and happier future blooms. Ironically, it all started with a single sleepless night for you.

54. You enter the beautifully decorated library - noting one of the wall panels seems to be missing - and find yourself surrounded by books about all sorts of secrets. Forget telepathy, telephony, teleology, or television. They've got entirely new teles here, ones long forgotten and forbidden. Or I guess first forbidden than forgotten. It'd be hard the other way around. You scan the spines of these secrets-filled books before settling on learning...

- telechirics (Go to 99)
- telegony (Go to 88)

55. We have a moment (what's the hurry?), let's get some food for the parapets. You definitely know what they eat, and, in general, what they are. Yes. There's probably a big bag of parapet food somewhere, like kibble or something. And that bag is most probably found in

- the attic. Parapet food is always in attics (Go to 126)
- the cellar. Parapet food is always in cellars (Go to 42)

56. You explain to the angels that they should go on strike. They try to argue their contract doesn't allow it, but you and the scorpion explain you don't need a contract that allows strikes in order to strike. The angels have bodily autonomy. They control their labor, so they can choose to withhold it. All through the heavens word goes out that the angels are walking off the job. Their solidarity is strong and the work of heaven grinds to a halt. Soon, the heaven cops arrive and, since the strike is illegal, arrest both the angels and the scorpion who was at the time on the picket line. Now, for the next step of your plan

- go to trial and prove your cause within the system (Go to 49)
- abandon the law and break the strikers out of jail (Go to 32)

57. With trepidation, you and the scorpion nod at each other. You will let the crooked Cardinal's plan unfold and let him bring the perfect beat into the Vocal House set. He may be onto something, and the chaos it is sure to cause may be your only way back out of the underworld. The ground shakes, the sky shakes, the very energy of life shakes. The resonation spreads through all the circles of the underworld, and all planes start shattering and collapsing. The ground buckles beneath your feet and you fall and fall, through time, through space, until the fragments of hell you stood on crash into reality, and smash back into the ground more or less right where your tent is. Sure, now hell itself has broken loose and the dead walk the Earth again, but those are all problems for the afternoon. For now, you climb into your tent for a good morning's sleep.

58. You step up and yell "J'accuse!" at the dastardly Frenchman, demanding he return the perfect beat back to the scorpion. Cardinal Richelieu, first minister of France, then explains to you that you have this all wrong, and does so persuasively. He's incredibly charming, you find, and you and the scorpion both quickly come around to his side and agree this was all a misunderstanding. He simply stumbled upon the beat here and didn't even know what it was, but now that he has it, he can finally do the only reasonable thing to do with a beat this perfect: restore Napoleon to his rightful place as ruler of not just the French, but of all the people. Completely won over to his point of view by the Cardinal's legendary speaking skills you come up with a plan to weaponize the beat to pursue this end.

- Use the perfect beat to raise the demons of the underworld as an army to be led by Napoleon, emperor of the French (Go to 125)
- Use the perfect beat to sneak Napoleon, Emperor of the French, out of the underworld and restart his empire (Go to 103)

59. Monster vanquishing time. Let's do this. You set off in the direction of the monster's lair and, as so often seems to happen in these things, you come across a binary decision. You enter a room with two pedestals holding two things you can use to challenge the monster, but of course you can only take one: a sword and an aludel.

- Take the sword and not just because you don't know what an aludel is (Go to 39)
- Take the aludel and you definitely know what it is (Go to 93)

60. You yolk a scratching post when no cat is looking and go running off into the moonset. And what a scratching post it is, made from a simply incredible material that is lightweight and rough, but never seems to lose its roughness even after polishing so many things, which, trust me, is quite incredible, material science-wise. It's going to revolutionize the world of both sanding stuff down a little bit, and filing nails, which is not nothing. Visions of a better, slightly smoother and nicely sharpened world in mind, you finally make it back to your tent and pass out for a well-earned good morning's rest.

61. This machine looks really complicated. It's probably going to be easier to just fix the Moon to better match the machine. Which you'll try doing by... I guess just thinking really hard on it. So, you do. You start thinking really hard. Aaaand it seems to be working? At least judging by how people are yelling by the windows and pointing at the Moon all alarmed. Oh, you may have moved it the wrong way. Oh dear, the astrolabe is even more incorrect now. A commotion is breaking out with all the people here getting quite upset for some reason, and you sneak out of the castle in the hubbub. The good news is now that the moon is quite a bit bigger and seemingly getting bigger by the minute, it's become quite a bit brighter and you have no trouble finding your tent. The bad news? None so far you can think of, at least none that can't wait till after you get a good morning's sleep.

62. Everyone loves granola, why not try that? You and the scorpion place the granola out and then, overcome by fatigue after your long night, both briefly doze off. You awake to see that the granola has grown into beautiful swaying granola trees. They make a pleasant oaty-nutty sort of sound as the wind moves through their delicious warm and crunchy branches.

- Move in and live amongst the granola trees (Go to 2)
- Spread the granola trees around the world (Go

to 120)

63. Wait, what? You're going to marry the ghost? How does that help in any way? The ghost's issue is the ring, not wanting to marry someone. And we just went over that the ghost can be problematic in relationships. But you're dead set on this course, so you are going to marry the ghost. On spending more time with the ghost, you do learn that you have quite a bit in common, like for instance you both have a particular life force, and... and well that's it, actually. However, despite your differences, you do, in fact, hit it off and a romance slowly blooms. An appropriate period of courtship later, you get married here in the cave and, in a nice sign of reconciliation, the goblin acts as your officiant.

64. Look, you're not a big fan of dark enclosed spaces, this path has a nice 'trash fence' sort of vibe to it, and everyone knows only good things happen at the trash fence. You walk towards the movement and notice it's mostly a group of people wearing fancy getups that include masks and surprisingly large shoes. Fairly normal for the circumstance, truth be told. As you keep approaching them, though, a cat struts across your path heading a different direction. This really changes things, doesn't it...

- What? No, it doesn't, talk to the masked people (Go to 25)
- Of course it does, start following the cat (Go to 112)

65. You do not need your tent. You do not need your self. You do not need the you that is. You are the night, and you are eternal. You are now the shadow that moves with the Earth, endlessly walking with midnight -- And quite rapidly, too. At this latitude, you scoot about at a brisk couple hundred miles per hour. You are the space between the stars, you are infinite, you are absence, the void, and the not. You embrace the contradiction and let your consciousness be and un-be. With the night you march into forever.

66. You realize that the negotiators for the management have a point here: you can't simply threaten. It will work better if you offer them something they can use to save face, and after some thought, you offer your tent, lost as it might be. Turns out the heavenly host needs not too much effort to locate a single tent, and it's brought in to the room. They even correctly squeezed it back into the original bag. After some time, everyone comes to an agreement. Everyone wants to avoid a strike after all, and the recovery of your tent, meagre as it may be, is enough to call it a win for everyone. The only problem, of course, is now you no longer have a tent to sleep in tonight. A small sacrifice to pay for improving the lives of so many and it does technically resolve your original problem because your tent is no longer missing, which you suppose is a nice consolation as you climb into your sleeping bag for a good morning's sleep.

67. You and the scorpion agree it'll probably be easier to just draw new space aliens to the planet than to try and find any who are already disguised amongst us here. Right, simple enough, but how will you attract the space aliens to you?

- No problem, you'll put on a light show for them (Go to 7)
- No problem, you'll put out some granola (Go to 62)

68. You introduce the dinosaurs to the concept of collective bargaining, and, just as importantly, the concept of a strike. As they walk off their dinosaur jobs and labor grinds to a stop, the richest owners of the dino factories buckle and agree to come to terms. Under your guidance the dinos win better working conditions, shorter hours, and higher wages. Well, not like literally shorter hours as in 55 minutes per hour or something. "Fewer hours" really. Fewer hours in a work week. Anyways, you become a legendary labor leader here before heading back to your human world that's luckily not at all like the dino one was and definitely has no worker's rights issues.

69. I'll be square with you, while writing this choose your own adventure I kinda belatedly realized I got the math wrong. There were supposed to be 128 paragraphs which is a nice round number (in base 2), and I thought I needed to start at 0 to make that work because I was adding paragraphs 1 and 128 as those weird meta-jokes, but actually that was just barely off and now there's two paragraphs that need some text that you can't arrive at. Uh. Congrats, you found the hidden paragraph. There's unfortunately no way out in or out of it, so you're

just kind of trapped here, but let's help you out and give you the tent. You find the tent. Yay. Ok, you can now go do that morning's rest here, in this paragraph. Good morning and good-bye. Sorry.

70. You decide to stay here longer and learn more of the history that's stored in the great mycelium net. You learn that since time immemorial the great mushroom meta-mind has made contact with other mushroom beings throughout our galaxy, all of them decomposers on their respective planets. Somehow through the process of eating life, they become more than themselves. Does it have to do with life force? Does it have to do with distributed consciousness? You have to find out.

- Abandon your self-identity to join Earth's mushroom mind (Go to 30)
- Use the mushroom mind to move your consciousness through the galaxy (Go to 117)

71. There's a lot of things you'll tolerate from a Choose Your Own Adventure, but an extended bit about parapets is not one. Right, you're here about a tent and you're going to concentrate on that. You set off down the mostly empty corridors towards the tall tower, no one here seeming to pay you much mind. On one turn, right before the tower, you suddenly realize you're right next to one set of the ballroom doors. Judging by the noise behind them, that's where everyone is. Maybe stopping in the party for a second wouldn't hurt before climbing that tower?

- Sure, what's the harm in popping into a mysterious party uninvited (Go to 14)
- No, when breaking and entering a tower, speed is of the essence (Go to 45)

72. With the sound of steel on steel, you and the monster battle in a struggle that would be immortalized by bards, had any been around to see it and had they had a convenient flashlight. Always carry a flashlight, kids. After what seems like hours, the monster loses faith and retreats, leaving you alone in the lair. And you know what? It's not a bad lair. Maybe the best thing to do here is call this your new camp. Frankly a pretty good result, all considered. You definitely won't become the new monster haunting this tunnel. Definitely.

73. Cave seems like a good idea. People probably camp in those, right? Or maybe it's like an art installation cave that was pitched as some intersection of art and technology, like usual. Though it is terribly dark here. Not in the night sense, but more in the only-lit-up-by-your-tiny-porta-potty-trip-flashlight sense. Oh, and speaking of, you just found a giant hole with someone crying at the bottom of it that you can't see, sounds like.

- Climb down the hole (which is definitely not a trap) and see who or what's crying (Go to 5)
- No, no, ignore the hole (it couldn't be a more obvious trap) and keep looking for your tent (Go to 127)

74. Just because something is missing, doesn't mean you can't negotiate away your rights to it. You and the scorpion offer up the perfect beat with the note that heaven's management has to find it first. Well, turns out, if anyone can find it, it's the hosts of angels. Much faster than you two could have expected, the beat is located and brought into the negotiation room. As the beat is played, all of heaven stops to listen. It is, indeed, perfect. It's like this beat has always existed just outside reality and all of creation has just led up to its reveal, and now, through this unlikely chain of events, as the beat is played throughout heaven, it transcends through all space-time and into the afterlife. Both the universe and everything outside it are now synchronized in a single pulse. Time itself stops. All is in sync in the now and always-will-have-been. All is perfect.

75. Look, if they didn't want you to open this door, they wouldn't have put it in the wall here behind an intimidating moat and drawbridge. With great effort, you manage to push it open enough to squeeze through. Inside you find a large amount of people, all wearing disguises, moving about. No one's noticed you yet, and luckily you see some materials here you'll be able to use to construct a disguise you'll be able to use to move about unobtrusively.

- Disguise yourself as a large crow (Go to 95)
- Large crow? That would never work!

Disguise yourself as a large raven (Go to 13)

76. You pitch the scorpion an idea: yes, one can never compose the perfect beat again, as its perfection requires uniqueness, but the scorpion could write a more perfect beat. All its many eyes

light up at the thought, brilliant and obvious in hindsight. You will simply create a beat that is more-than-perfect. However, you both quickly realize there's a difficulty. This will, by definition, require more than human technology. You will need space alien tech. Now, how will you get access to that?

- Find space aliens already on Earth (Go to 121)
- Attract new space aliens to Earth (Go to 67)

77. Hey, the night's still young and these people are ready to party. You hang out with them, eating earthworms, hanging out under heat lamps, and catching up on latest gossip on who's raising eggs with whom. Just normal human conversation that normal humans have. As the sun comes up, they walk you back to your tent, the location of which they seem to have somehow already known, and you crash for a few hours of a good morning's sleep still laughing at how silly you were being.

78. There are two guards by the library trying to keep lookie-loos from wandering in and seeing the treasure, but you come up with a good distracting story about what a strange phrase "lookie-loo" is. While they're pondering it, you sneak past them. You immediately realize the treasure isn't IN the library; it IS the library. This is the priceless Amber Room of first the Prussian rulers, and then the Russian Tsars. It ended up here in this castle, somehow. Incredible. You can see why they were trying to keep people out, but what are you going to do now that you're in?

- Inconspicuously walk off with one of the wall panels (Go to 101)
- Join this amazing network of art thieves (Go to 92)

79. Armed with the aludel, you rapidly sublimate the monster and it disappears with nary a wisp of smoke. The experience of doing so, you would have to say, was sublime, and now that you've truly experienced the sublime, you feel in touch with the universal whole. You feel transcended beyond the material, beyond your body, and beyond your former petty needs. What is a tent to you when you are a being of eternal oneness and a necessary part of the everything? You don't require the tent, you are an entire and complete being. This is it, true happiness and the knowing of the self and the self's purpose. Also, knowing what an aludel is.

80. Somberly you proclaim your judgement in favor of the tortoiseshells. The cats are at first quite surprised, judging by their cute little paying-attention faces, but then, after greater introspection, come around to your way of seeing things. A subtle but profound change to cat society comes about because of your ruling, and the new cats in charge invite you onto their Supurreme Court where you become of the most important jurors of your time. You never quite figure out what's going on with the smell-based argument thing, though, but you seem to do ok without that.

81. This is an opportunity you didn't expect but one that you and the scorpion readily embrace. You're heading off into space with the space pirates to begin a life of space piracy. You are going to search the cosmos for the mythical fabled more-than-perfect beat. You are going to ambush the spaceships of space colonialist empires as they expropriate music back to their capitals. You build up wealth and prestige, gain the trust and companionship of your fellow pirates, and one day, you will lead them on a dangerous exploration of a mysterious cursed space island where the more-than-perfect beat is buried. And all of it with a dashing flair and an inexplicable sorta Dorset/Cornwall accent. Yarr.

82. It seems pretty intuitive that if you're looking for someone then you ask around if someone may have seen them. So, you and the scorpion ask who might be about whether they may have run into space aliens here recently and, lucky break, people totally have. Turns out, there's a nearby saucer just a bit out of the ways and you get the directions from those local party-attenders. You and the scorpion head off towards the spaceship and, on approach, you notice something: the closed ship is already humming along with a sound that creates an incredible beat. In fact, quite possibly, an even-more-perfect cosmic beat, no doubt a byproduct of the cosmic power source used to fly the craft.

- Record the beat (Go to 108)
- Reverse engineer how the beat is made by the saucer (Go to 105)

83. Word goes out that there's going to be a trip back with the new mammal to learn a whole lot

of new and exciting things, and dinosaurs come running far and wide to join you on your way back through the cave. You all travel together swapping stories about how great warm-bloodedness is, and how annoying reptiles are, always laying on warm rocks. You arrive back at the festival and are ready to teach the dinosaurs the important stuff. Like how to party. Other stuff, too, for sure, but for now, party.

- Set off looking for a good party already in progress (Go to 86)
- You're the one with the clutch of party-curious dinosaurs, start your own party (Go to 48)

84. You and the scorpion walk up into the heavens and start searching for the beat there (though you keep your eye out for your tent as well, just in case it turns up here, after all one never knows, does one), but you keep getting distracted by something you had no idea about: the working conditions here are awful. The angels here are incredibly overworked, their hours are too long, their pay far too low, and in general the vibes are quite poor. You and the scorpion speak to quite a few angels, all of whom are having a pretty bad time of it, and decide you should probably help them

- Lead the angels in a wildcat strike (Go to 56)
- Help the angels negotiate better terms (Go to 89)

85. You step into the light of the hidden cat valley and announce your presence. Up close you're even more struck by the beauty, harmony, and a pervading sense of wisdom in the place. The cats are surprised to see you, but glad to have a neutral outsider arrive, as they're locked in a dispute between the calicos and the tortoiseshells and hope you can be the disinterested party who judges the proceedings.

- Agree to learn about the disagreement and act as judge (Go to 6)
- Decline because you want to see their traditional way of resolving disputes, or because you thought "disinterested" meant "not interested" (Go to 119)

86. You head off towards the loudest bass you can find and the dinosaur exploration party tails you on the way. As you suspected, they're extremely thrilled to get to see your mammalian party ways, as they have nothing like this at home. Pretty soon, there's dinos on the dance floor, dinos on the art sculptures, and one's even in the DJ booth putting the prehistoric beats down. You spend the rest of the night having a heck of a blowout here before walking the dinos back to their cave (after a friendly deinonychosaur flies up enough to spot your campsite), then you make it back to your tent for a good morning's sleep.

87. Somberly, you proclaim your judgement in favor of the calicos. The cats nod, most of whom seem to have expected this result. You are thanked for your service as human juror and the cats offer to walk you back to your tent. For your troubles they give you the traditional parting gift of their kind: a partially disemboweled grey squirrel.

88. Studying ancient texts, you slowly come to gain the power of telegony, unlocking the combined genetic memories of not just your ancestors, but all your ancestors' previous sexual partners, too. Which, ok, first of all, is admittedly kind of weird (you had never thought about your ancestors like this), and second of all, gives you an incredible download of knowledge that strikes you like a thunderbolt.... aaaand it's mostly how to gather plants. Bit of farming in there, but really, it's just hundreds of thousands of years of picking up seeds, taking them with you, and then eating them later. But here's the thing with this knowledge, all the plants in the area you walked by earlier suddenly go from being just "plants" to being familiar landmarks in your memory, and you remember how to walk back to your tent, plant by plant. Setting off, you sneak out of the castle and quickly navigate to your campsite bush by bush, then crawl in for a good morning's sleep.

89. You don't think it's time for a strike yet. It's probably going to be better to at least try to negotiate first. You come to the table with the representatives of the angels and your friend the scorpion. The management says they're willing to renegotiate the contracts to keep you from striking, but they need some sort of a thing they can bring back to show as a win. You and the scorpion think what you can toss into the offer to sweeten the pot somewhat

- Include the missing perfect beat (Go to 74)
- Include the missing tent (Go to 66)

90. "I know who you really are," you cry, "you're all frog people!" A silence falls over the crowd. They slowly admit to it though. Yes, they are frog people, and they've been living amongst us, working their plans, and are almost ready to begin the final portion, but they're stuck choosing between two options and maybe you can break the tie for them

- Secretly seize power of all governments and rule the world (Go to 16)
- Literally eat the rich and leave the rest of the world systems in place (Go to 3)

91. You and the scorpion listen to the aliens and realize they're only half right. Humans can't possibly understand a more-than-perfect beat... yet. But they could if you improve them and make them capable of it. Some more dried fruit jerky and a few beers later the space aliens agree to let you use their very advanced technology -- that is definitely not being used as a magic plot device -- in order to make all humans capable of perceiving the full scope of a more-than-perfect beat. After booting up the species improver (and downloading the mandatory patches, it's like every time it boots there's more patches), all it takes is a few mouse clicks to get it done, but something unexpected happens. It turns out as soon as humans gain the ability to hear the more-than-perfect they also gain the ability to appreciate the ambient sounds of nature, including just silence, as their own more-than-perfection. It turns out that everything around is already a more-than-perfect sound, we just couldn't hear it. As you crawl into your tent later, finding it easily being more than- on for a good morning's rest, you listen to the flap flapping in the wind, but now appreciate it in a whole new way.

92. Clearly the mysterious people here are on to something. Their ability to steal all the world's rarest treasures shows a transcendence of both time and space, limits beyond limits. You make a determination. You have managed to mingle amongst them so far, but you are really going to commit to it now. You will walk amongst them until they accept you as one of their own. You will earn their trust and learn all their secrets. Yes, they may be the greatest thieves of priceless art in the world, but you will steal something even more priceless: their hearts.

93. Only a fool would take a sword when an aludel is an option. Frankly the situation is basically resolved now, now that you've picked up the aludel. Yup. You pick it up by the part that all aludels are commonly picked up by and you're not at all surprised by the weight as you definitely expected it to be this exact weight. Armed and ready, you come up with the battle plan that will best utilize the strengths of the aludel, the thing that you definitely know what it is

- Obviously you will throw it at the monster (Go to 122)
- Obviously you will sublimate the monster in it (Go to 79)

94. You set a lure for the space aliens. You bait them with no space alien can resist: dried fruit jerky. Or just fruit jerky, I suppose the dried is redundant. Anyways, soon your lure brings the expected result and a few space aliens come walking over from over the hill where they were hanging out. Munching over some dried fruit jerky, you and the scorpion explain to them your quest to create the more-than-perfect beat and the space aliens listen, then point out a complication you didn't foresee: because the more-than-perfect beat is more than perfect, humanity will not be able to fully understand and enjoy the beat. A good point well made, and one will need to tackle, but how?

- simple, improve humans to be more-than-perfect, too (Go to 91)
- simple, perform the more-than-perfect beat not just for humans but for the universe itself (Go to 17)

95. A raven disguise? How absurd. From the stuff available here by the door you construct a quick crow disguise and confidently move amongst the others in the castle. Sneakily listening to their conversations, you overhear there's apparently two stolen treasures somewhere in the castle. Well, now, that's something you can definitely take a slight detour for. You've never seen a proper stolen treasure before, and it sounds like one is in the study of the castle, and one is in the library

- Sneak into the study (Go to 102)
- Talk your way into the library (Go to 78)

96. You realize that the issues with the dinosaur society can't be fixed with just labor action. It

will require revolutionary zeal. You organize an activist cadre of dinosaurs who can lead the way and hope the rest of them will support you. You lead the dinosaurs through their very wide dino streets on the way to seize the reins of power and the dino guards melt away in your presence. Swept into power by the crowds, you help design a new constitution and set up a system where power is distributed down to various dinosaur communes that make the effective decisions at the local level. You end up spending the rest of your time there, helping resolve disputes and make sure the new worker's government runs smoothly. You can't think of a term for this sort of community based -ism, but hopefully someday someone will come up with one.

97. You dash towards the duplicitous Cardinal and grab the perfect beat from him. He tries his best to deceive you, but the music here is far too loud to hear his words. Well, the music, plus the trembling of the underworld itself as the perfect beat came so close to this Vocal House set that reality threatened to unmake. Armed with the perfect beat you and the scorpion make a dash out of the underworld, hypnotizing the guards with the beat to sneak past them. As you step into just dawning sunrise back on Earth, everything seems right with the world now that the beat is here. The flowers are a bit brighter, the birds more in tune, and your tent is just up ahead. There's so much you'll be able to do, and so many lives you'll improve with the perfect beat, but for now you're just happy to crawl inside the tent and get a good morning's rest.

98. You come up to the dinosaurs and they're quite surprised to see you as they've never seen a mammal before. They're quite amazed by your debonaire lack of feathers and your fancy bellybutton, and they decide they have much to learn from you. You, feeling pretty good about your exotic mammalness, agree that you do in fact have quite a lot to teach the dinosaurs. Now, how to go about this?

- Bring the dinosaurs back to the surface to teach them there (Go to 83)
- Stay here and teach them where they live (Go to 46)

99. You take the tome on telechirics and study in silence as the world moves past you. Hours seem to go by, but you finally understand the secrets of this art. You can now touch things remotely. Not like, move them or bring them back, but you can touch them. Which is... I mean it's not nothing. It is a mutant superpower, basically, just a slightly esoteric one. And here's the thing, while it doesn't let you find your tent super easily, it does let you remotely feel like you're laying on your own sleeping bag. Which at this point is good enough and you get a good morning's sleep, just sorta floating in a corner here. Tomorrow's problems can wait for tomorrow.

100. Right, listen, you're alone here, it's late at night, maybe it's best to avoid suspicious groups. Let's scoot into the shadows here and take a shortcut back to the main part of the festival. It's probably right behind those bushes. Or maybe not. Hm. Those bushes over there? On closer inspection also no. And now you're lost. Not just sort-of-lost like before. You're well-lost now. Great. And your flashlight seems to be dying. Double great. What do you do now?

- Embrace the night and darkness (Go to 107)
- Look for any lights in the distance and walk towards those (Go to 44)

101. Well, this is stolen goods, so what harm can it do to steal a stolen good? It's a victimless crime basically, right? You subtly help yourself to one of the baroque decorated wall panels and, while unsuspiciously whistling, casually stroll out of the castle. You end up searching for your tent quite a bit longer, but it seems less of a chore with this great wall panel in tow. It becomes the centerpiece of your place back home, an incredible conversation starter, and one of your most prized possessions. Whenever people end up asking you about where you found it, you just demurely say "Oh this old thing? Found it while camping, would you believe."

102. You mingle with the crowd, and as they sweep in and out of the study in a particularly good moment, you sneak in undetected. You instantly see the treasure you heard about earlier. Underneath a glass cloche you see the God Particle. There's no doubt about it. It has no spin, no charge, no colour, positive parity, and it's massive. This is the one that scientists have been searching for all these years. It's been here all along, hidden away in this castle by these strange, masked people. You have got to do something about it. It can't remain trapped like

this.

- Steal the God Particle and bring it back to the scientists (Go to 36)
- Free it and release it back into nature (Go to 21)

103. You figure it'll be easier to try and mobilize the French than all of hell. You manage to find one of those little portable Bluetooth speakers (surprisingly common in hell, go figure) and hook the perfect beat up to it. As you move towards the exit back to the world, you, of course, get spotted. Upon throwing the phone and speaker with the perfect beat down one of the many bottomless pits, its perfection is sufficient to get all the guards to chase it down. Soon, you, the scorpion, Napoleon, and the perfidious Cardinal Richelieu, all exit and, of course, end up in back at the festival, not France. The original plan of raising an army is quickly derailed as they catch up on centuries of progress. Soon the sly Cardinal has a new idea. Soon, the four of you are running the world's most successful influencer empire with the tricky Cardinal pulling the strings to make Napoleon the leader of all the People (of sorts anyways). You never did find your tent though.

104. So, I mentioned there were two and this is the other one. This is the other paragraph that came from me doing the math wrong and that can't be reached. Another little plot hole in reality. Yup. Thanks for hanging out here with me. Read any good books lately? Possibly this one? It's not quite a book but it's similar to one conceptually. Hopefully you enjoyed it. Or maybe will enjoy it, it's possible you just started here on paragraph 104. I don't know. You just being here means that we are disconnected from continuity so maybe this is the beginning of you time here, maybe the end. Thanks for reading though and I hope you have a nice day.

105. Instead of just recording the more-than-perfect beat, you and the scorpion realize that what would be really valuable would be to sit down and figure out how the beat is made, that way you can recreate it. You quickly start disassembling the humming and buzzing saucer to try and figure out how each component interacts, but soon notice the relationship between them affects their sound. As you move them closer and further apart the pieces resonate differently in subtle ways. In moments, you realize that the more-than-perfect beat is gone and cannot be reconstructed again, but as you search for it you also realize maybe you never needed the beat. It was actually more important to learn how to manipulate this as an instrument and learn to create your own beats. In a way, the real more-than-perfect beat was the weird noises you learned to make along the way.

106. The party must exist, you realize this in your soul, and you must help it keep existing. You come up to the other people working in the back and ask what you could do to help. Soon, you're put to work doing some of the tasks that are required for any party to exist, be it moving furniture, corralling the fae, or rewiring the cables. You also realize, over time, and in a strange way, there is something powerful to working backstage at an event. Weirdly, you are in control of these people. Not in a malicious way, just that your work creates their experience. That is a form of domination, is it not? Strange you've never thought of it that way before. And so, the eternal party keeps turning, and you become one of the mechanics that makes it so.

107. Actually, now that the flashlight is off, you feel rather at home here in the darkness. You almost find it comical how frightening you found it before. You spent so long scaring yourself with what could be out there in the dark that you forgot to actually experience what is there, which is nothing. And now you are one with the moment, the present, the here, and the night. Where do you take this new yourself that is bonded to the lightless expanse?

- Spread the darkness to all (Go to 22)
- Walk with the night alone (Go to 65)

108. You and the scorpion surreptitiously record the beat as it's playing out of the saucer. It's exactly as more-than-perfect as you hoped it would be. You two sneak back to re-listen to it when something about it jumps out at you: there's a message in it. Yes, this more-than-perfect beat contains a secret that's hidden inside of it. Hours go by as you and the scorpion studiously analyze and analytically study the beat, stretching, filtering, and modulating it until, finally, the words are perfectly audible. You have no doubt the most important secret space message from space says, "Equis-eh te-ere-ah effeh-emme

baja-california mexico". This surely is its own secret code, and one that you will devote a lot of your time to decoding.

109. Your body and your mind are the same, you force yourself to remember. Consciousness resides in the physical self, and that physical self is currently climbing a very tall tower. And is very tired. You accept the fatigue, you accept the pain, and accept the limits that are on you because of your self in the world. You still climb despite the the effort it requires of you until, after what feels like hours, you reach the top. You look out at the landscape unfolding below you and consider how incredible it is that you, this physical object that you are, can perform the act of looking. And as you perform the act of looking you spot your tent, tiny from up here, but clearly there at a distance. It can wait a few more moments. For now you'll just enjoy the act of being a self and of looking.

110. Well, there's that ridge that runs down the middle of the event here, and you figure once you climb it, it'll be obvious where your tent is. After all, how many tents could there be here? Well, fifteen minutes of climbing later, the answer is very many. They're abundant in every direction and all look quite similar, but none of them look like yours, specifically. But also, there's a castle here. A sizable one. Weird you didn't see it before. And on the other end of the ridge there's a large scorpion wearing headphones and it's waving you over.

- Maybe check out the castle? Could maybe climb it so you can see even further? (Go to 123)
- That scorpion does look like it maybe needs some assistance, maybe check that out (Go to 29)

111. From the goblin's tea chat you learn that the ghost committed some preeeeeeetty hard-to-forgive betrayals of trust. You definitely see the goblin's point of view here, and you two think about how to resolve this general situation before settling on the obvious course of action:

- Obviously, the only reasonable thing to do here is to figure out what is keeping the ghost here and settle any unfinished business so the ghost can find peace (Go to 116)
- Obviously, the only reasonable thing to do here is to marry the ghost (Go to 63)

112. You follow the cat and watch as it crests a hill and disappears from view. Soon after, you also crest that hill. Before you unfolds a whole secret cat kingdom. Cats here live in a complex society with technology far advanced beyond anything in the mundane world. Shocked by this revelation, you try to come up with a new plan.

- Enter the cat kingdom and announce your presence (Go to 85)
- Monitor the cats in secret to see what you can learn (Go to 4)

113. Look, if you love something, set it free. Now, you don't technically love the demon, at least not on a personal level, but maybe you'd grow to love them? And in general, you're a loving person. Ok, here goes. You pop the attic door open. The demon thanks you, stretches its wings, asks if they could repay you, and agrees to help you find the tent. Turns out being carried by a giant flying hell creature is a good way to get about, and the demon soon locates your tent, then drops you off at your tent. Quite a night, but it all ended well and probably nothing to worry about re: giant demon flying off. All stuff to think about you get a good morning's sleep.

114. Reality check, it's late at night and you still need to get back. Besides, you're not some cathropologist. Or maybe canthropologist. This pun doesn't really work either way. Anyways, point is, you're tired and just going to grab one of these here advanced artifacts and bolt back to introduce it to the human world

- grab a very advanced water dish (Go to 34)
- grab a very advanced scratching post (Go to 60)

115. With your new hivemind spores in hand, it's all so simple. The problem at the center of capitalism is that, in the pursuit of selfishness, our ethical bonds to each other are sacrificed. The mushroom spores spread through the planet, and as they synchronize to our minds they change the 'me' to 'us' and unite us into a single self with a single set of goals. The market, instead of being the thing that sucks wealth out of the weak for the benefit of the strong, becomes a tool for efficient distribution in a way that benefits all. A subtle shift in identity is all it took to save us from ecological and economical collapse, and all it took was a single night's stumbling through a cave.

116. Look you don't become a ghost because you want to, everyone knows that. You become a ghost when you can't move on. The right thing to do is to let them find eternal peace. Luckily, the thing that's keeping the ghost from moving on isn't the gold ring, which is great because it would otherwise violate some principles this adventure makes regarding respecting your choices. No, it's actually that people keep camping over their resting place. And currently, it's you. Which makes an easy problem to solve. The ghost guides you to its resting site and you dig up its bones, move them over a bit so they're out of the way, then bury them again. Normal festival night sort of stuff. What follows is a good morning's sleep for both you and, at last, the ghost.

117. You release your body and let the mycelium network synchronize your mind into a wave that moves across lightyears to the other networks of decomposers across our galaxy. Why do they all exist? Why do creatures that decompose everything create these conscious megaminds on each planet? Why do they all synchronize with a cosmic pulse? Has someone designed this? Is it co-evolution? As you synchronize your consciousness to the remote minds in preparation of travel, you decide that finding this out will be your goal. You will be the one who will know the secrets of the intergalactic mycelium.

118. "No, sorry, I am not Omlagus Garfungiloops" you explain. The person apologizes for having mistaken you. It was dark and they didn't get a good look, you understand. You hang out here a bit, talk about the weather, the government, real estate prices, how Jake E. Lee is the most underrated of Ozzy's guitarists, but not how silly the earlier misunderstanding was, which you definitely get the feeling you shouldn't bring up again. The person seems to be a bit awkward about it. They point out the direction back to the festival area and, once the sun comes up, you leave and find your campsite easily. Crawling into bed for a good morning's sleep, you laugh about the confusion. You're definitely not Omlagus Garfungiloops. Definitely not. Probably.

119. "No, I'm actually very interested," you explain to the slightly confused cats. You are allowed to sit in a little box near the front of the proceedings concerning the dispute, a rarity in their mostly harmonious coexistence. The process ends up being a mostly screaming affair, as caterwauls of all volumes and pitches surround you, going on for hours, before a peaceful and mutually satisfactory agreement of some sort is reached. You are struck by the incredible beauty and simplicity of the system.

- Move in with the cats to further study their conflict resolution methods (Go to 8)
- Go back to the human world and tell them about this new system of problem solving (Go to 114)

120. These trees are incredible, fast growing, delicious, and healthy. You and the scorpion agree, you must bring these to the world. You both grab all the granola fruits you can and set off on a journey, sort of like Johnny Appleseeds of the baked oats plants. Your travels take you far and wide, bringing nutritious easy-to-grow plants to all, helping stabilize world populations, and easing the effects of climate change. You don't know this yet, but you will go down in history as mythic figures who made everything a bit better for everyone, and your tent ends up being wherever you placed your head that day, always in the shade of a softly rustling granola tree.

121. You agree it'll be much easier to find the space aliens already here then try to bring them out from space. Space is quite big after all, and it might take them a while to get here. That decided, you then tackle the other problem: how to go about finding the space aliens here on Earth. You and the scorpion come up with two ideas:

- Ask around, maybe someone here knows some space aliens (Go to 82)
- Attract them to you with a clever ruse (Go to 94)

122. You hurl the aludel at the monster and the aludel shatters on contact with its tough skin. The monster stares at you in confusion.

"Why did you throw that?" the monster asks.

"Um..." you confidently reply.

"Didn't you realize that would happen? Don't you know what it was?"

"Well..." you begin.

"Fine." The monster says. "Look, this isn't complex at all and has to do with states of matter. Let me show you..."

And as the hours go by and the monster explains the fundamentals of alchemy to you, you find yourself enraptured by the learning and decide this is your calling. You end up moving in with the monster and become an apprentice alchemist under its wise tutelage.

123. How did you not see the castle earlier. It's huge, with multiple towers and whatnot, including one huge one, and a big moat - all that castle stuff. Also, it's made of stone, feels like, so it was probably a huge pain to build it here. Oh, and judging by the sound, there's quite a party running inside. Ok, new plan, where there's parties, there's people. At least one of them has to have seen your tent. ...Fine, you're just rationalizing so you can go to a party, but, hell, it's a plan. Let's commit to it.

- Safety third, let's climb the wall (Go to 31)
- Safety second, let's force open the castle door (Go to 75)

124. There are many things you are capable of doing: destroying planes of reality, leading conquering armies of demons, or even stealing a scratching post; but there's only one thing your morality will not let you deign to do: become a music pirate. The weight of the situation crashes down upon you. You cannot use alien tech to construct this more-than-perfect beat. It would be inauthentic to Earth sounds. Persuaded by your strong ethical code, the scorpion agrees. The both of you thank the pirates for coming, but you will create this beat the hard way. No shortcuts. You learned almost too late for yourselves that humans and scorpions have to find their own way, to make their own mistakes. There can't be any gift of perfection from outside ourselves. Humans and scorpions have always sought an end to the toil and misery, but it can't be given, it has to be achieved. There is hope, but it has to come from inside, from human and scorpion themselves.

125. You and the scorpion are introduced to Napoleon by the cunning yet persuasive Cardinal Richelieu and are welcomed with open arms as the ones who can help raise, for one last time, an army for him. You work a bit to hook up the perfect beat to a large speaker system here and, as soon as the sound is turned on, the obvious thing happens: the forces of the underworld begin marching in sync to the beat. Like a siren's song, the demons gather here with Napoleon as their leader. No one can resist a beat this perfect. Then, the army sets off, with you and the scorpion at the lead. You're not sure how this all happened so quickly (was it the beat? was it just the powers of the guileful Cardinal?), but you're now leading the demonic forces of the underworld to conquer the world. You never quite found your tent, but you do now have a fairly nice (if a bit 1800s retro) military one, so things could be worse.

126. Well, the parapets are up high, so the kibble for them has to be up high too. You wouldn't store the food for a pet far from where the pet is, that's just silly. So, you move along the empty corridors of the castle until you find a way up into the attic, which you find locked and barred, with a sizable demon stuck behind the bars. The demon asks politely if you could maybe let it out because it's been so lonely here. Loneliness is really a terrible sensation, but you also figure maybe there's a reason why the demon is locked here? Hm.

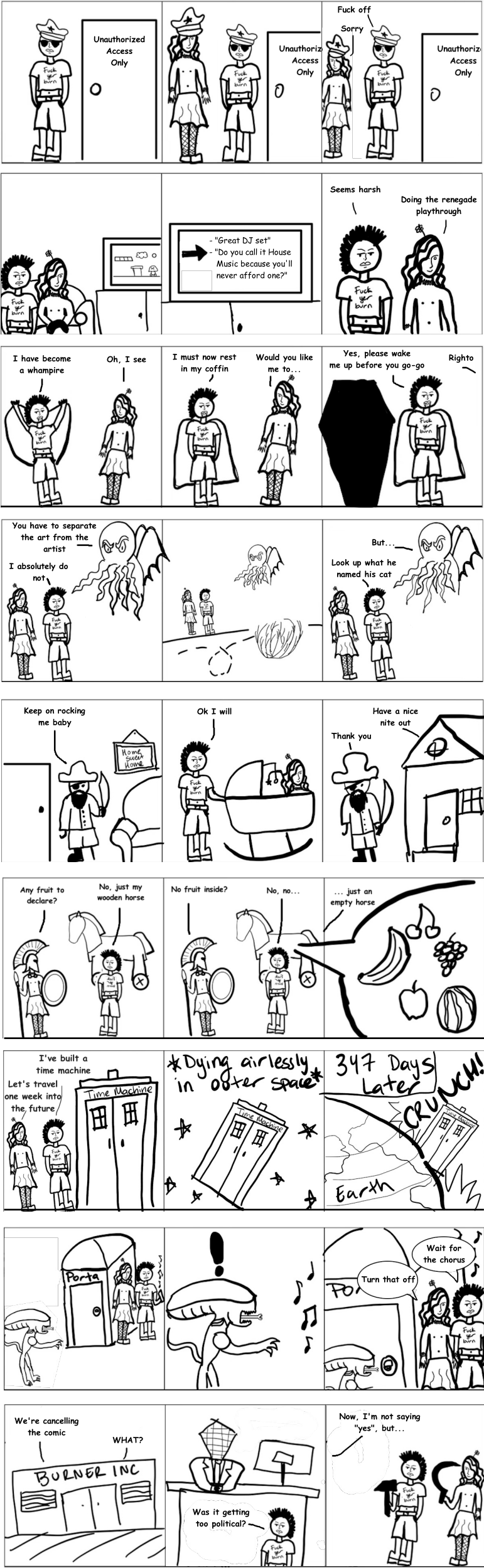
- You can't possibly leave the demon alone here, let it out (Go to 113)
- You can't possibly leave the demon alone here, move in with it (Go to 26)

127. Corridor for you, thank you very much. If there's one thing you know about holes, it's that they're hard to climb out of, so in one is the last place you want to be. You instead travel deeper and deeper into this cave that goes an unexpectedly long distance in and down. In fact, by the time you come out of it, you seem to have walked yourself into a whole new environment. You're in a giant chamber, well lit, and are shocked to see giant plants, big insects, giant fungus, and (sorry for burying the lede here) dinosaurs moving about here.

- Wow! Giant fungus! Let's go over there and talk to them! (Go to 24)
- Wow! Dinosaurs! Let's go over there and talk to them! (Go to 98)

128. And here you are in the tent. As simple as that. Did you teleport yourself in? Did you bring the tent to yourself? Were you ever not in the tent? All of it sophistry, irrelevant. All that awaits you now is a good morning's sleep and the knowledge that a bit of oppositional disorder is all it took to raise you beyond the limits of time and space.

SPARKLE AND DEEPER



WHAT'S IN AND OUT

- OUT: Chill older nudists
IN: Yuppies on vacation
- OUT: Waking up in poison oak
IN: Waking up in cactus
- OUT: Partying with strangers
IN: Testing your drugs
- OUT: Avoiding politics in a safe bland get-alongness
IN: Communism
- OUT: PBR
IN: Tecate
- OUT: AI DJing
IN: Running after vinyl that the wind is carrying off
- OUT: Google WIFI
IN: Write a letter or something, I don't know.
Fuck Google
- OUT: Tourists
IN: Participants
- OUT: Satellite launches
IN: Night kites
- OUT: Netflix over Starlink
IN: Reading a book from the Little Free Satanic Library
- OUT: Whippet bombing
IN: Cleaning up after yourself
- OUT: Ketamine
IN: Psilocybin
- OUT: 23andMe
IN: Looking a lot like uncle Ted
- OUT: Incoherent and overly complex drug trade deals
IN: Venmo
- OUT: Astral projection
IN: Laser projection
- OUT: Falling asleep with your sound blasting in a locked art car in the quiet zone
IN: Not being a trust-fund baby
- OUT: The playa provides
IN: Radical self reliance
- OUT: Blaming Boomers
IN: Blaming Victorians
- OUT: Sleeping
IN: The haunting sound of the tent flap fluttering in the wind
- OUT: "Funny" ironic DJ sets
IN: Genuinely liking your music
- OUT: RVs
IN: Sleeping in the back seat of your car
- OUT: Complaining about darkwads
IN: Embracing the sweet touch of mother night
- OUT: House music
IN: Home music
- OUT: Health checks
IN: Vibe checks
- OUT: Bartering
IN: Bartending
- OUT: Finding a stranger in the Alps
IN: Finding a stranger on Mount Small-Ridge-Center-of-the-Event
- OUT: Practicing and rehearsing your DJ set
IN: Blaming the person who put the songs on the SD card
- OUT: Playafoot
IN: Wetwipe baths
- OUT: Buzzing people with drones
IN: Getting people buzzed with cold ones. Fine, this one is not great, but look, don't judge me, there's like 40 of these and not all can be great, we're not all Dorothy Parker
- OUT: Property rights
IN: Human rights
- OUT: Holocene
IN: Homogenocene
- OUT: Remembering where your tent is
IN: Wandering about in ever increasing circles cause if you do that you have got to find your camp at some point, right? Right?
- OUT: Imagining dragons
IN: Hallucinating dragons
- OUT: Just walking into the private part of someone else's camp without asking and grabbing some water
IN: Not that
- OUT: Dying
IN: Hanging on to life by the skin o' your teeth
- OUT: Keeping your food cold
IN: Gambling with your life every time you eat
- OUT: Complaining about sportsball
IN: Realizing that alienation and loneliness is one of the biggest mental health dangers in a capitalist society and the bonds of arbitrary unity with other sports fans provide important feelings of belonging for some people
- OUT: String theory
IN: Loop quantum gravity
- OUT: Phone pics
IN: Paintings
- OUT: Tee time
IN: Tea time
- OUT: Drone warfare
IN: Witchcraft
- OUT: Incesticide
IN: In Utero
- OUT: Basing NPCs on D&D alignment charts
IN: Basing NPCs on horoscopes
- OUT: Efficiency
IN: Empathy
- OUT: Not having your burn fucked
IN: Fuck your burn
- OUT: Complaining
IN: Volunteering

THANKS FOR READING

By Camp Satanic Drug Thing, out on that dirt path in the borderlands. Come say hi.
AND PLEASE DO NOT FUCKING LITTER THIS

Youtopia, 2024

